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大剣使いに謎の遊び人、乙女騎士……  
新キャラも続々登場で、大きく動き出す恩返しストーリー!

# **High spec village**

**– Ore no Ongaeshi: High Spec Murazukuri –**

**- Volume 2 -  
Spring of Mayhem**

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# Chapter 18

## The Beginning of a New Season

Spring had finally come to Urd Village.

“It’s spring at last, Yamato-sama.”

“Yeah, the sun feels really warm.”

“Yes, spring weather at last! ”

While happily looking all around, Liscia was walking by his side.

They were in the process of checking the condition on the fields and waterways to plan the next steps to take, as well as checking whether there were houses that got damaged during winter.

Urd village was located in the basin of a mountainous area, but since its humidity was low, it received less snowfall. Thanks to that, so far no noticeable damage due to snow could be seen, so Yamato felt relieved.

“Well, isn’t it young Liscia and Yamato-dono? Would you like to see the ‘babies’? ”

As they were patrolling the village, one of the villagers called out to them.

“Should we go see them? Yamato-sama.”

“Sure, let’s go.”

Guided by the old woman, they went inside the building with the ‘babies’.

The cries of newly born babies had echoed inside this shed a couple days ago.

“Wow... they are really cute... ”

“So there were ten in total. Its good considering this was the first time.”

Next to him, Liscia was looking at them with a charmed gaze.

In front of them, were a few lovely baby pigs. They numbered ten and were currently drinking breast milk from their mother inside this dim-lit livestock shed.

“Have you had any problem so far taking care of the pigs? ”

“Not at all, I’m used to handling livestock here after all, Yamato-dono.”

Just as she said, this old woman was skillfully taking care of the wild pigs. Besides pigs, they also used to take care of goats, horses and cows in the village before.

“If we catch more in the forest, we’ll make sure to bring them to you.”

“I have high expectations, Sage-dono.”

Leaving it to the old woman, they left the pig breeding hut and headed towards their next destination.

The anxiety about the successful breeding of the wild pigs was finally gone, and Yamato now felt relieved.

*The number of pigs born seem to be the same in this world...*

“Even so, to be able to capture those wild pigs, Yamato-sama sure is...”

“I wasn’t that big of a deal.”

“That’s not true, to be able to do so, as expected of Yamato-sama! ”

Just as Liscia said, the pigs in the hut were previously captured in the forest just before winter arrived.

Their size and appearance were almost identical to those seen in Japan. And unlike the Wild Boars, their temper was more docile, so Yamato decided to try and keep them as livestock.

Over the course of a few days, several males and females were captured. And by borrowing the knowledge of the old woman, they were made to immediately breed. Several of the females got safely pregnant and the first one recently gave birth to those ten piglets. And soon, another one should give birth to more piglets in a few more days.

*The fertility of the pigs is truly amazing...*

Pig’s high fertility was a well-known fact.

Their pregnancy period was shorter than that of people, and they could give birth in just four months. A female pig could produce up to thirty piglets every year since it could birth around ten at a time.

Furthermore, since the piglets born became fertile in just a few years, the pigs' fertility was considered top notch among livestock.

"It's good the pigs' breeding seems to be going well."

"Yes. I think that's because pigs like those have been kept in the village before."

"I see."

Liscia said similar words to that of the old woman, that pigs and other livestock had already been taken care of in the village before.

The livestock was kept in that shed, and they were left out to forage for food in an area close to the forest.

It was a normal practice to kill many of the pigs and salt their meat after being fattened during summer, just before winter arrived.

As things stood now, it probably would take at least two more years to somewhat recover the pigs population. That was not counting any unexpected sickness, bad climate, or food issues.

Until that got back on track, they'll have to keep hunting Big Rabbits and Wild Boars to compensate for the lack of meat. And since that also served as a valuable hunting experience for the kids, it would be like killing two birds with one stone.

"Those baby pigs were really cute, Yamato-sama."

"Yeah, one could feel the miracle of life."

"Ya-Yamato-sama... D-do you like babies...?"

While walking by his side, Liscia asked while stumbling on her words. She wanted to know what his opinion was regarding babies.

"Well, I think whether it's a domesticated animal or a person, having lots of babies is a good thing."

"M-me too! I think so too..."

Breeding livestock was important to provide meat for the village.

And a high birthrate was also indispensable to increase the prosperity of the village.

In modern Japan, the decline in population had become a big problem. And with the labor shortages and the declining of national strength, a positive birthrate was quite

important to have.

“Hmm? What’s wrong Liscia-san. Your face is red.”

“Eh...”

“Is the sun too hot? Should we go to the shade?”

“No... I’m fine, Yamato-sama. I’ll give it my best! “

“Hmm... ? Its fine if you’re ok. Then, shall we go visit the paddy fields now?”

“Yes! “

As they went around checking the state of the village, they then decided to head towards the just finished paddy field.

That paddy field was an abandoned land previously used to grow the wheat, and was reclaimed using the farm equipment Yamato devised, and remodeled to be used as a rice field.

# Chapter 19

## Moving Forward with the Agricultural Reforms

The spring sun was shining warmly over Urd Village.

At that time, Yamato and Liscia decided to go see the state of the rice field on the outskirts of the village.

“The flow of water in the rice field is going smooth.”

“So this is a ‘rice field’, Yamato-sama?”

“Yeah, a field for planting the Inahon, made by the power of people... that is a rice field.”

“I see.”

Before their eyes was the sight of a rice field with water flowing through it.

It was squarely-shaped and several fields were evenly spaced out, just like in Japan.

*A different world and traditional Japanese rice fields... truly a strange combination. But it feels kind of nostalgic...*

A wishful emotion surged from deep inside his heart as he was beholding such a spectacle.

This was the place he had made plans for last autumn, and with the help of the villagers, they had it reclaimed. A scene before the water entered the fields previous to the rice planting spreaded, giving off a nostalgic feeling that was hard to be expressed with words.

“Ohh... Yamato-dono and young Liscia. What brings you this far from the village?”

“Oh, we came to check on the state of the paddy fields, and the ‘seedlings’”

The one calling to them was one of the elderly people who were in charge of the management of the rice fields. Those villagers were mainly entrusted with the management of the water, and the growth of the Inahon seedlings.

While guiding Yamato and Liscia, they went together with to the seedling hut.

“Good... the seedlings seem to be growing up nicely.”

“Like Yamato-dono said, we’ve been paying close attention to the temperature in here.”

“I leave it in your care then, until it’s time to plant them.”

“No problem.”

Yamato checked the conditions on the seedling shed as he gave off some instructions. It was necessary to be especially careful in regards to the temperature.

“So these are the ‘seedlings’, Yamato-sama?”

“Yeah. After they grow a bit more, we will plant them in the paddy field.”

“I believe this way is far better than trying to plant the seeds directly, like we’ve been doing with the wheat.”

“If my calculations are correct, we should have over twice the harvest of last year.”

“This is going to become twice of that harvest!... As expected of Yamato-sama.”

Liscia, who only knew of direct planting, was surprised at Yamato’s words.

Although it was common practice in his former world, seedling planting was a revolutionary method nobody used in this world.

*It appears like all the work we’ve been doing by trial and error since last autumn will finally bear fruits...*

Seedling planting was part of the agricultural reforms he was implementing in this village, but that was not all of them.

Among them, the plowing work done by the Wild Oxen had already produced great results.

Those were the wild cow-like animals that were caught in the forest.

Although their original temper was mild, they were a cattle that once it went wild, it could even repel a big bear.

A number of these were captured and kept in the village to work and breed. After being fed by human hands, they were working obediently so far.

*I never imagined I’ll be able to secure such a work force...*

After Yamato handed over a rough design, the old blacksmith Gaton produced this agricultural equipment called plow, and adapted it to be used by the Oxen. With them pulling it, the reclaim process of the damaged fields was done.

With their strength, several times of normal cattle, the soil was easily turned and mixed with a fertilizer, turning those wasted fields into these splendid paddy fields.

The impact it had on the villagers when they saw it in action could be described like [A powerful tractor suddenly appearing in a small countryside village].

"The way to grow the seedlings, making a fertilizer, dealing with weeds... Yamato-sama really knows everything. Truly amazing..."

"Farming was something I never disliked, that's all."

In light of Liscia's respect, he tried to act a little modest. Although it was not an act, him being humble was nothing but true.

These reforms he was implementing in the village were simply natural in modern Japan. Or rather, it was only an imitation of the agricultural technology of the Edo and Meiji periods, since they were relatively close to this world's level of civilization.

The only reason she felt amazed was because of the farming culture in this world was simply lagging behind.

*No, maybe those hard-working Japanese people who invented these were really amazing.*  
He thanked them in his mind.

After leaving the seedling shed, they continued to patrol the village.

"Ahh. Yamato-niichan-sama and Liscia-sama. Good morning."

A girl suddenly called out to them. She was a little younger than Liscia.

"Were you recording the state of the fields?"

"Yes. As Yamato-niichan-sama instructed, I was recording it with drawings and letters."

It was the painter girl the one who came to talk to them. She had a weaker constitution compared to the other boys and girls in the village.

However, since she helped her parents since a young age, she was pretty good at drawing pictures. So, Yamato gave her the job of secretary and instructed her to record the work done in the village since last year.

“I still have plenty of paper. Let me know when you run out.”

“Yes. As always, thank you very much, Yamato-niichan-sama.”

There were several notebooks and sketchbooks in his large backpack used for mountain climbing, which he had brought from Japan. And some of the ones he was not using, were handed over to this girl, along with a couple pens.

Coincidentally, every time she called him [Yamato-niichan-sama] he couldn't help but to feel embarrassed.

All the other children in the village called him [Yamato-niichan!] but she wanted to be polite to him, so she added a -sama when she called him. She gave off the feeling of a sister.

“The paper Yamato-sama has is so white, one would doubt it was paper, right?”

Next to them, Liscia also gave her impressions. She felt impressed by the quality of the notebook that was handed to the painting girl.”

“Is such ‘white paper’ so rare? ”

“Yes, usually parchment or tree skin are used. In the past, a peddler showed us some paper, but it was rough and it had a dirty color, and its price was extremely high.”

“...I see.”

That was explained by Liscia.

Japan was a culture of paper, and it was familiar with the historic legacy left by paper and washi. Most likely, in this medieval-like continent, the paper-making techniques weren't developed much.

But with this, an opportunity presented itself. He had an idea.

“Should we try to make ‘paper’ in the village next time?”

“Eh! Paper... ?”

“I'm not sure if we'll be able to make paper this white, but if its washi, I think we can

handle it."

"So you can also make paper, Yamato-sama... "

"Amazing, Yamato-niichan-sama."

Although the two girls were impressed, this wasn't that big of a deal for him. Yamato had experienced making the Japanese traditional paper called washi before, the reason for that being, the influence of his self-called adventurer parents.

He had already seen plants suitable for making washi in the forest, and as for the tools, they aren't that complicated to make.

And with the abundant pure water available in Urd Village, surely high quality washi could be made.

Obviously, regarding the tools, he was going to ask Gaton and his grandchildren to help him make them.

"Uhmm... I wonder what that bustle is about."

It was then.

The figure of someone coming from the center of the village while calling out his name could be seen.

"Yamato-boy-niichan! So, you were here."

"What's wrong? Does Gaton jii-san needs me? "

The one calling out to him was a Mountain Clan young boy. He was the only one that called him [boy-niichan].

Being one of the twin grandchildren of Gaton, he was also an apprentice blacksmith. Sometimes, Gaton had him come in his stead when he needed something.

"Yes! [Come see the shooting test of Liscia's new bow] , he said. I think."

"Ok, tell him we're going to the village square now."

"Gotcha, I'll go tell him then."

And so, the Mountain Clan boy ran back to the workshop. Looking high in spirits.

"Yamato-sama... what did he mean with new bow... ?"

"Oh, it's something I asked Gaton jii-san to make for Liscia."

“So it was just finished...”

“There’s still the final adjustments. Let’s go back to the square.”

“Yes, Yamato-sama.”

Like this, Liscia and Yamato finished their inspection and decided to return to the village square.

In order to confirm the performance of the bow designed specifically for Liscia.

# Chapter 20

## New Strength and Lurking Shadows

After being called by Gaton, Yamato returned to the village square.

“Hmph, kid. You sure took your time.”

“Is that the custom longbow?”

“Here, I’ve already adjusted it for Liscia jou-chan’s use.”

Gaton handed to Yamato the bow he had requested so that he could confirm its performance. It was a smooth work crafted accordingly to his design and with a suitable finish.

“As expected from Gaton jii-san. Such a skill, it’s hard to believe a person made this.”

“Hmph. It doesn’t feel sincere coming from you, who came up with such a strange mechanism.”

Yamato had already grown accustomed to Gaton’s mocking manners. However, he was sincere about how he felt regarding Gaton’s skills.

“Yamato-sama... is that the Marionette Bow... for me...”

“Yeah. I just need to do the final checks, just one moment, Liscia-san.”

It was a type of compound long-bow that Yamato had previously requested Gaton to make.

Its user was to be the hunter girl Liscia.

The design was a rough blueprint drawn by Yamato, and it was completed in around a month while refining and discussing details with the old Gaton.

*But seriously, Gaton’s skills are so amazing it’s even scary...*

Yamato felt deeply impressed as he was appraising the bow.

This Marionette Bow was very different from an ordinary bow. It was in theory an adaptation made based on the compound bows of his former world.

Compound bows were complex modern bows made using several mechanic elements and principles, such as levers and pulleys.

When Gaton made the crossbows, Yamato got a hint about combining gears in the final product.

And from that hint, an idea was then developed which further evolved into this compound bow, the Marionette Bow which he then drew a schematic of it with Gaton.

“Did you hide the gears and pulleys inside its body?”

“It is rude to the God of Iron to expose such design on the outside. Worry not, I properly made it.”

“I see, so that’s it.”

What surprised Yamato the most was its sophisticated design.

The Marionette Bow on the outside appeared almost like a regular long bow. However, a complex mechanical system was designed and concealed inside the bow.

“Go ahead and try it, Liscia-san.”

“Ok, I’ll do so.”

After finishing the inspection of the Marionette Bow, it was handed over to Liscia, who would actually shoot with it.

Even if the appearance and design was excellent, it could be considered a failure if it presented a problem of power or usability.

“Well, here I go.”

After taking a deep breath, Liscia moved into stance and drew the bow. Her aim was a metal plate previously placed in the village square.

Holding their breath, the villagers who had gathered before were quietly watching her. All the eyes in the square gathered on her as she let go of the bowstring.

“Haa! ” Along with her voice, the arrow cut through the air as it was released.

“Oh! ”

“That was... ”

In the next moment, surprised voices rose from the villagers. Many of the people had missed the arrow since it flew at a tremendous speed.

“Amazing... it even penetrated the metal plate...”

But the most surprised of them all was Liscia.

Penetrating that thick metal plate was something she could never do so far with her favorite bow. Yet, she felt as if she was using her usual bow.

“Ok, next is to check the fire rate and accuracy.”

Said Yamato as he took a few fruits the size of a thumb. He wanted her to try and shoot the moving fruit next.

“Here it goes.”

“Ok! Yamato-sama.”

With her voice as the signal, Yamato threw the tree nuts, one after the other high into the sky. The throwing intervals were considering the ‘continuous shooting’ timing that Liscia had with her normal bow.

Even if its fire power was high, if the fire rate and accuracy dropped, he would consider this prototype a failure.

But those worries ended up being in vain.

“Oh! You hit them all!”

“I was so fast, and what’s more, that destructive power. I’ve never seen a bow like that...”

Cheers erupted from the villagers.

This test also ended in a great success.

Liscia quickly shot all the tree nuts thrown by Yamato, one after the other. Her form was beautiful, without any wasted movement.

“Yamato-sama... Gaton-san... this is really amazing...”

Due to the excitement and shock, Liscia was at lost for words.

She kept looking at her hands and the bow alternatively over and over. Her mind still

couldn't believe such an incredible result.

"Its power is slightly inferior to the crossbow. However, the Marionette Bow has a superior flying distance, and better fire rate and accuracy."

"Hmph. Why are you surprised? it was made following your design after all."

"Yeah. But the result far surpassed my expectations."

"Well, I too felt a little surprised to be honest."

Both the designer and maker were actually dumbfounded.

Neither of them thought the performance of the finished Marionette Bow would be so high.

"Obviously, in the same way as the crossbow, nobody would be able to replicate this."

"I can tell."

"Maybe neither I could make a second one."

"That would be a problem."

Yamato's mind settled as he jokingly discussed with the old craftsman.

"Liscia-san. You should start getting used to that bow starting from today."

"Yes! Truly, thank you very much, Yamato-sama... "

"Hmm? What's wrong?... why are you crying?"

"When I thought now I could be of help to Yamato-sama, tears just started flowing... "

"Don't push yourself. I have high expectations of you."

"Yes! I'll give it my best! "

A maiden's heart was a mysterious existence.

But Liscia was pleased to have a new and powerful weapon to protect the village.

Combining her superior skills as an archer with the high performance of the Marionette Bow, she was sure to become a force to be reckoned with.

Yamato felt he could rely on her even more now.

"Yamato-niichan! "

It was at that moment.

While shouting his name, a small figure was running towards the plaza.

“What’s the matter?”

One of the village children was breathing hard as he arrived running. He was one of those patrolling the outskirts of the village today.

“Yamato-niichan! Something serious happened!”

“First calm down, let me hear it.”

Ha passed some water for the child to drink and waited for him to regain his breath. Calmness was something important to have at any time, and this was something he had already taught the children.

“Today again, we found those footprints. There were a lot this time!”

“I see. Alright...”

Some truly unpleasant news arrived at a time just before the rice planting began.

What the boy had found were traces of intruders who were foreign to the village.

# Chapter 21

## Tracking

After receiving the report on the suspicious footprints, Yamato rushed to the scene.

“Yamato-niichan, it’s here.”

“Oh, certainly.”

From the direction on which the patrolling boy pointed at, traces of people could very well be seen.

Behind some bushes, the plants were trampled and the soil was filled with what appeared to be shoe footprints. This was obviously not a natural occurrence.

“Looks like five people.”

“Ehh, isn’t it four? Yamato-niichan.”

“Look closely. The walking pattern is different here even if those are the same shoes.”  
“Ah, it’s true. Impressive! ”

Pointing to a set of easily recognizable footprints, Yamato corrected the boy’s mistaken speculation.

Since he loved mountain climbing, Yamato was good at observing small details while in the forest.

It was a skill learned and developed originally from the influence of his self-called adventurer parents.

[I was suddenly left deep inside a forest. They said it was a game to see if I could follow their footsteps back to the camp, and if I won I could have dinner.]... ... He remember how his parents told him it would be fun and suddenly forced him to play such a ‘game’. It was a traumatizing experience that even now made his head hurt when he remembered it.

“Yamato-sama, are these the same people as last year? ”

“Certainly, the way of walking seems the same. They must be.”

“I see.”

With an anxious expression, the village chief granddaughter, Liscia answered. In a place close to this, during last year's autumn, similar footprints were found.

It happened two days after the ‘welcome party’. Having a sense of discomfort, Yamato wandered around the village and found that place.

Since then, he decided to strengthen the security by forming patrolling groups around the village. And today was the second time a trace of people was found.

“You can easily see the village from here. I think they were doing some reconnaissance.”

“Reconnaissance...”

While staring at the peaceful village, Liscia’s face became gloomy as she repeated that word.

‘Reconnaissance’ was performed from here, aimed at the village. Her beloved village was the target.

“What should we do...”

She didn’t know how to react at such a shocking fact.

In the village there were nothing but elderly people and children. The dependable adults were forcibly taken away by the Lord.

She couldn’t help but to think, what would happen if such a malicious group aimed at this weak village?

With no wall or fence around the village to protect it, it was basically defenseless. A village such as Urd, with no adults in the way surely looked like a delicious prey.

“It’s alright, Liscia-san.”

“Eh...”

“I’ll do something about it.”

“Yamato-sama...”

Placing his hand over the shoulder of the pale-looking Liscia, Yamato tried to reassure her.

He told her he would protect Urd Village.

“Ok. We’ll also perform some scouting, guys.”

While staring at the trail of footprints, he then gave some instructions to the children. *An eye for an eye, we will counter it with some reconnaissance of our own.*

“Maybe you mean, we’ll be doing the usual ‘hide and seek tag’ game? Yamato-niichan.”

“Yeah. The first one to find the place where the footprints are leading without being noticed wins.”

“Alright, I’ll be the winner! ”

“I’ll also try my best.”

The children were suddenly motivated by his instructions.

As they hunted in the forest during last autumn and winter, everyone was very excited about the new ‘game’ he had taught them.

Using the word ‘game’ instead of ‘train’ was after all, more efficient for motivating children. This was something he had come to learn as he spent more time in the village.

“Yamato-sama... can I join you too?”

“Yeah. I leave my back in your care then, Liscia-san.”

“Yes, please leave it to me! ”

And so, it was decided that they would follow back the suspicious intruders’ trail.

They went back to the village to arrange the necessary equipment, and to explain the circumstances to the village chief and other villagers before departing. This was because he wanted to pinpoint the opponent’s location while the footprints were still fresh.

“Ok then, we’re going. Take care of everything in my absence, Village Chief.”

“Be careful, Yamato-dono.”

“It’s only reconnaissance for now.”

“We’ll keep the village safe while you’re gone.”

Since he had already told the village chief about emergency procedures for self-defense, he wasn’t worried about something happening in the village while he was gone. All they had to do was to strengthen the patrols and retreat without fighting in the first place if enemies were spotted.

“Ok, let’s go. You guys ready?”

“Yes, Yamato-sama.”

“Let’s go, Yamato-niichan! “

The current members were Liscia and Yamato. Three of the village children also came with them. Since this time they were surveying a potential enemy, only the best of the children, who were accustomed to the forest and didn’t stand out, were coming with them.

*Alright then, there’s no telling what kind of trouble this might stir up. The result is certainly going to be something to see.*

With such worries in his mind, they began the tracking of the intruders.

◇ ◇ ◇

The tracking of the footprints was progressing smoothly.

[Yamato-niichan, they keep going this way.]

[Understood.]

While tracking, they signaled each other without speaking. Using hand gestures and bird whistling, they kept in contact with each other.

Because it was a convenient way to convey the presence of beasts or other opponents, this was something they had learned to do previously.

*Even so, the trail is so easy to follow, they look like total amateurs...*

The skills of the other party could be told to some extent from the way the footsteps were laid and their movements.

Guessing from that, Yamato noticed that the intruders who came to scout the village were quite the amateurs. They moved blindly, without any caution, through the forest and mountainous area.

Thanks to that, the tracking was progressing smoothly. However, they kept being careful as they followed the trail.

*Hmm... that is...*

“Stop. Be on guard.”

As he was moving forwards, Yamato then sent a signal to Liscia and the children behind him. Everyone immediately responded to that signal by lowering their bodies and stopping.

*So, that is the hideout of the intruders...*

They had spent several hours advancing through the forest and mountains, since they first left Urd Village.

*Is that an abandoned windmill... ?*

On an elevated little hill, stood a lonely old windmill. It didn't appear that the windmill had been used in a long time.

*Two people guarding...*

While raising vulgar laughs, two men were hanging out in front of the mill. Additionally, there were signs of more people inside the building.

*As I suspected, thieves... probably a bandit group...*

It was an armed bandit group that used the old windmill as their hideout. In other words, the ones targeting the Village of Urd were these people... this bandit group.

*Well then... what should I do?...*

Apart from himself and Liscia, the rest of the inhabitant of Urd were kids and old people.

Turning around while hiding, he began to consider possible countermeasures for the future.

# Chapter 22

## Resolve and Determination

After scouting the bandits at the windmill, Yamato's group returned to Urd Village.

"Ok, now I'll briefly explain the situation."

After gathering all the elderly people in an open space in the village, Yamato started talking. Since this was an emergency meeting taking place after dinner, children were not allowed to participate.

Yamato had managed to get close to the windmill without being noticed, and was reporting to everyone about the information he had gathered.

"The bandits are planning to attack Urd Village in five days."

"What..."

"No way, in only five days..."

The villagers were restless after hearing about the impending attack.

Everyone here already knew that there were suspicious people wandering close to the village.

However, they never thought the other party would take action so soon.

"The number of bandits is quite large. The village will have no way to repel them if they attack."

"How could this..."

"If so, the village will..."

The scale of the bandit group was bigger than what Yamato thought. Not many of them looked skilled, but that didn't matter with a group of that size.

And without a proper defensive perimeter, Urd Village wasn't a place suited for a defensive battle. If it were to become a battlefield, their numbers would overwhelm them.

"They were working together with a slave merchant. Apparently, they attack remote villages to catch and sell the children. Everyone else is killed."

"They kill everyone else... ?"

"How can they, to sell children as slaves... "

The sorrowful voices of the villagers echoed in the square.

When he infiltrated the windmill, Yamato noticed that children from other village were captured inside. According to Liscia, she believed they were inhabitants of the neighboring grasslands based on the description of their clothes.

Yamato heard the bandits say that the slave merchant would come pick up the children four days later, and that they will attack Urd Village the following day.

They planned to kill every villager other than the children, and take all the valuables, such as livestock and anything important.

They were laughing as they spoke about how easy of a job this would be.

"That's the report."

Yamato explanation ended there.

After that, they started to discuss together with all the villagers present, about what actions to take.

"We can try to surrender and give them all our possessions, maybe... "

"Were you not hearing what he said? They plan to kill us all... "

"Maybe we should abandon the village and settle somewhere nearby while they leave... "

"No, we cannot, they might return after we come back... "

The villagers were noisily debating as they threw ideas.

They tried to come up with plans to survive and save the village.

"But right now, we're just a village without adults... "

"Even though everything was beginning to return to normal... "

However, the discussion kept moving in a straight line. And eventually it ended up

going into a pessimistic conclusion.

It was true that the village didn't have the presence of adults, who were supposed to be the most reliable existence in a village. This was just a village surrounded by mountains and located basically in the frontier, so there was no place to run away to. Being 'checkmated' perfectly described how the villagers felt.

Everyone eventually turned silent at such a bleak situation.

"Can I say something? Village chief."

"Of course, Yamato-dono! "

Surrounded by such a dark atmosphere, Yamato raised his hand to speak. All the villagers turned their eyes towards him at the same time. He hoped he could say something to break the current situation.

"Why does nobody think about fighting to defend yourselves? Why not try to survive by trying to defeat the bandits? "

"....."

"Defeat them..."

"That would be murder..."

The village square fell once again into a heavy mood. As if touching upon a taboo subject, criticizing voices rose.

*I knew this would be their reaction...*

It was an expected response.

After all, most of the 'fighting power' in the village was the group of crossbow-armed children.

Since last autumn, they have mastered the use of the crossbow while hunting, and their expertise had risen considerably.

Also, thanks to the efforts of the old blacksmith Gaton, the crossbow was already spread to everyone.

Although, having the disadvantage of not being able to be fired continuously, its destructive power was tremendous, and the accuracy and ease of its training were

also on a different level.

And when used in combination with the shield vanguard, fighting in close quarters, which was its biggest drawback, could be solved.

Maybe even in interpersonal combat they would be a force to be reckon with.

Besides, adding to the forces in the village was Yamato and Liscia, with her new Marionette Bow.

The elderly people, with their weak physical strength, couldn't be counted as a fighting force.

In other words, they must have thought of his proposal as something like [We can survive if the bandits are murdered by the hands of our lovely grandchildren].

They were their families, even if not everyone was related by blood. They were troubled about how to feel about that.

"I won't force you. Before dawn, tomorrow I'll leave the village and head towards the windmill."

Saying so, Yamato left the meeting. In order to get ready for tomorrow morning.

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*Morning already, huh... ?*

As always, Yamato woke up before the sun had risen.

He washed his face in the small stream, feeling refreshed.

His breakfast were leftovers from last night's dinner.

He was going to walk through forest and mountains for several hours. Therefore, eating mainly carbohydrates was a good choice.

*I wonder if this much is enough?*

After finishing breakfast, he made the final checks on his equipment.

Water for the road, preserved food, and the equipment he deemed necessary were packed. He tried to bring only the minimum.

*Well then... next would the 'that' right... ?*

He wore his usual hunting equipment.

His crossbow and a few of specialized bolts. He also equipped several knives for self-defense.

*This is just a hunting tool... it is for security... no, that's wrong. It is a weapon, for taking people's lives.*

He corrected himself as he tried to make excuses.

This world wasn't so forgiving. Sometimes, in order to save someone's life, you had to take your opponent's.

[Wait! Let's talk this through] Such words would be instantly ignored by the enemies. He knew how cruel and brutal those bandits were, since he had seen the 'miserable sight' inside the windmill.

"Ok... I should go now."

He left the single-story house where he lived and headed towards the outskirts of the village. He left no note or letter.

He was sure he would come back. Even if his opponents were arrogant and brutal murderers.

Regardless of his improved physical abilities, he knew he would be at disadvantage. He wasn't as adept at killing as they were. Even if he could overwhelm his opponent with his fighting ability, there might be a moment of hesitation in his mind.

And that hesitation sometimes could be lethal.

"But, I have no choice but to go... "

He had already made his resolve.

As he advanced, a shadow further ahead could be seen.

"Liscia-san... Village Chief... Gaton jii-san... everyone... "

Waiting for him in the outskirts of the village were the people of Urd.

The village children, as well as the granddaughter of the village chief, Liscia. The

village chief, along with the elderly people. And the Mountain Clan Gaton and his grandchildren.

“You guys, those...”

He was lost for words.

The residents of the village were all armed and gathered just a little outside the village.

*When did they decide to get ready to fight and gathered together?* He wasn't aware of it and didn't notice beforehand.

*No, perhaps...* He then thought he might have been too excited and didn't pay attention to his surroundings. It was probably decided in last night's meeting.

“Yamato-dono... I showed you a disgraceful sight last night. We people of Urd have our pride. Let us go together with you!”

Every older villager had a weapon, including the Village chief. Those among the elderly villager who could move relatively well were all armed.

Although they lacked strength, their eyes shone, lit by a fighting spirit.

“Yamato-niichan, you're so sly to try and leave us behind! ”

“Even us, we can already take care of ourselves! ”

While carrying a crossbow each one, the boys in the village said as they looked at him with confidence.

They knew if they were caught and sold by a slave merchant, their lives would become miserable.

“I'll protect Yamato-sama's back.”

Liscia said to Yamato as she confidently smiled with her Marionette Bow in hand. Her figure was like a goddess appearing in myths, divine and reliable.

“Everyone...”

Yamato's heart was shaken as he beheld this unexpected sight.

He had felt like he couldn't completely trust everyone in the village. But this showed him that he still had a long way to go.

“It's going to be a tough and bloody battle.”

“We’re prepared for that, Yamato-dono.”

“[Become strong so that you can live] right... ... ? Yamato-niichan.”

“No matter where, I’ll follow you Yamato-sama...”

Everyone nodded at his words. Their determination was seen in their strong gazes.

“Good... then, let’s go.”

And like this, Yamato led every person who could move in the village, and left in order to ‘remove’ the bandit group from the windmill where they had settled.

# Chapter 23

## Assault

The 'battle' finished soon.

"Noooo, please help me... "

"Just my life, please, only that... "

They laid at their feet, kneeling as they begged.

Frightened by the tragic scene of corpses lying around, everyone was desperately pleading with crying eyes.

"What should we do, 'Aniki'? "

"Like we planned take all their belongings, every single thing, leave them with nothing."

"W-why! ? We will die in these mountains! "

"Then do your best to survive. This is the minimum mercy you will get from our 'Mountain Dog Group'."

After the battle was over, the withdrawal operation began.

Following those orders, the remaining people were strip of their belongings and those were thrown inside the windmill.

It was unknown how much time it would take them to reach the nearest village on foot.

Wild beasts inhabited nearby and were sure to be encountered along the way, so their survival rate while being practically naked would be extremely low.

"Alright, let's go back to the hideout."

"Roger, 'Aniki'! "

In accordance with Yamato's order, all the members of the self-proclaimed mercenary group 'Mountain Dog' departed, returning to Urd Village.

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“This far will be alright, everyone.”

They were now quite a considerable distance away from the windmill. Yamato spoke to the villagers in order for everyone to relax and calm their alertness.

There was no sign of the remnants of stripped bandits chasing them, so there was no longer the need for acting.

“It’s good it ended safely, Yamato-sama.”

“Yeah, for the time being, we can have a little peace of mind Liscia-san.”

“It was really nice that everyone in the village ended up without major injuries...”

The assault on the bandit’s hideout, the windmill hut, ended up with their sweeping victory. It was an event that almost felt unreal to them.

According to Liscia who was walking next to Yamato, it was a one-sided battle with barely any harm done to the villagers.

“Aniki, can we take off this disguise?”

“Sure, it should be fine now. Also, you don’t have to keep calling me ‘Aniki’ anymore.”

“How about Yamato-Aniki-chan! Can we use that? “

The children following us from behind started removing the clothes covering their mouths, taking off their disguise. The other villagers also undid their disguise.

When they stormed the windmill, they disguised themselves.

It was a simple cover up, consisting of a thin cloth to hide their facial features. In order to further conceal their identity, they were forbidden to call each other’s name and had to use nicknames instead.

*‘Aniki’ huh?... thinking about it now, it was quite a clichéd name to choose.*

Yamato’s nickname was “Aniki”.

And in the setting, he was the leader of the made-up mercenary ‘Mountain Dog’ group. Although it wasn’t him the one who named it as such, he couldn’t help but to think — *Just give me a break.*

*(TLN: Mountain Dog is written the same as Yamato, just adding one stroke, so it is a pretty lame and unimaginative name. Just a reminder, Yamato is written 'Yama' from yama [Mountain] and 'to' from hito [Person])*

"Even so... we really... we won, Yamato-sama..."

"Yeah. It was thanks to the kids and everyone in the village, and also thanks to you, Liscia-san."

"Not at all, it was all thanks to Yamato-sama's tactics!"

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The strategy to attack the bandits was a simple one.

First and foremost, Yamato and Liscia erased their presence and approached the windmill.

The first set of opponents, the guards, were taken out from long distance using Yamato's crossbow and Liscia's Marionette Bow.

[Ah... ...]

[Ugh... ...]

The two lookouts had their skulls penetrated and died after a short death cry.

After that, the advance team consisting of children of the crossbow squad positioned themselves around the windmill in two groups.

Their formation was diagonal to each other and perpendicular to the windmill, to avoid friendly fire. Yamato decided on this by using an actual war formation as reference, used by the Daimyos of the Sengoku period.

After taking out the lookouts, he snuck into the windmill hut.

Making use of animal fat and dry straws brought from the village, he burned them, producing a thick, black smoke. The tallow, being a poor-quality oil, was perfect since it had a strong odor and produced a very black smoke.

[Fire!]

Trying to imitate the lookout's voice, Yamato shouted towards the insides of the windmill. [Get out of the cabin before everything is burned to the ground] He yelled.

“Aaaaaah...”

“What on earth is happening!? “

Surprised by the smoke and flames, the bandits jumped out of the windmill cabin one after the other.

With there being only one exit, the building was in a state of turmoil that could be compared to a beehive being poked.

“Alright, FIRE!”

Along with his signal, bolts were fired from one of the crossbow squads lying in wait. It was a crossbow tactic to allow continuous fire by dividing the crossbow squads into two groups and having one fire while the other reloaded.

A violent rain of arrows fell upon the bandits.

“Ahhh! ”

“Hgguu! “

One after the other, the bandits who came out from the cabin met a quick death after receiving the attack from the crossbows.

And after being attacked by an enemy they weren't expecting, they were swallowed by a whirlpool of deeper chaos.

“Protect yourself with a shield! ”

“It's not working, what's with these arrows!? “

Some of the bandits tried to guard themselves using shields. And considering the situation, that would have been the wisest choice.

But, even the sturdy shields were easily penetrated by the crossbow bolts. The dumbfounded bandits were trembling while watching their companion being taken down one after another.

They were currently in the center of a crossbow storm that couldn't be prevented even by those wearing metal armor. In this world's level of civilization, it was an overwhelming attack which didn't even allow to defend from it.

“I-I surrender! ”

“I beg you! Please, just spare my life! ”

After considering their current state of being nearly at death's door, the remaining bandits gave in.

Yamato's, and everyone's aim was not to mindlessly slaughter them all. So they accepted their surrender.

“I will, but instead of taking your lives, we will strip you off of all your possessions.”

In this way, the battle was finally over, and the possessions and valuables of the bandits were confiscated. After collecting the horses and a wagon they had, everyone returned home.

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“Was it really alright to bring the bandit's wagon along with their belongings? Yamato-sama.”

“After questioning one of them he told me, these were all goods they stole. There's no need to hold back, let's consider this a reparation fee.”

With an anxious face, the village chief' granddaughter Liscia was glancing over the wagon and goods collected from the bandits.

The main reason why Yamato decided to bring their possessions with them was because there was the risk of them being used by other bandits if left behind. Besides, expensive horses and a wagon were valuable for the village.

“Reparation fee... ? Is it?”

“Think of it as a nuisance fee. It will also serve to cover the living expenses of ‘these children’.

“...I'm really glad you decided to bring ‘these children’ along...”

“It was a choice they made for themselves. Let's decide what to do from now on after returning to the village.”

Liscia had a concerned face as she looked at the weak children riding in the back of the wagon. They were wearing clothes with patterns Yamato hadn't seen before.

*So those are children of the grassland people, the 'Han clan'... Well, I hope nothing bad happens if they come with us to Urd...*

After being caught by the bandits, these were the children who were imprisoned inside the windmill cabin.

It was decided to bring them back to Urd Village after hearing from them about how their families had been slaughtered and they had since become orphaned.

# Chapter 24

## New Inhabitants

After taking care of the bandits at the windmill cabin, everyone returned to Urd Village.

“Alright, I’ll begin with the report.”

The morning after coming back from the subjugation, Yamato gathered all the elderly people in the village along with those who hadn’t accompanied them, at the open plaza and started speaking.

The report was made until this morning since it was already evening when everyone returned.

So, Yamato started to inform everyone about what had happened.

“The bandits using the windmill as a hideout were eradicated. I checked the surroundings, but there were no others nearby. So, I think it will be safe for a while now.”

“Oh, you have our deepest thanks! Yamato-dono.”

“As expected of the ‘Sage’ Yamato-dono! “

“It’s not that big of a deal. If you want to show your appreciation, thank Liscia and the children.”

*After all, the children were the ones who played the most active part. Without their overwhelming firepower, it wouldn’t have been such a one-sided victory.*

“Also, you and the village chief, even if you didn’t take part in the fight. In a way, you had the most merits.”

The village chief and other old people able to move were actively following the group. From a safe distance behind Yamato and the children, they were pulling the cart carrying supplies.

And because everyone had that sense of security, they were able to properly concentrate on fighting on the front line. Also, the experienced old people helped with the post-battle ‘cleaning’ and withdrawal work.

“The loot secured consists of the goods owned by the bandit group, two horses and a wagon.”

“Oh! Those are really priceless.”

“The horses and wagon will really be of help, Yamato-dono.”

After finishing cleaning up, they collected the goods owned by the bandits. Of course, Yamato consulted with the village chief and obtained his approval.

Bandits and thieves had basically no human rights in this continent.

So, it was a common story that those who had exterminated the bandits were granted ownership of their belongings, and it was the same case this time.

These bandits had gathered a considerable number of valuables.

They made a fortune by attacking the widespread frontier villages and selling of the children as slaves, along with the loot they plundered.

The goods collected now were to be used to assist in the managing of Urd Village.

Moreover, two splendid and valuable horses were secured too.

Horses which could be used as means of transportation or for assistance in farming would be extremely useful in a remote village such as Urd.

“In addition to that, the windmill cabin was destroyed. That way, other bandits won’t be able to use it in the future.”

“That’s a relief.”

“That should be fine. It was a wise decision, Yamato-dono.”

With the windmill destroyed, even if bandits came again, they wouldn’t be able to use it as a hideout.

The windmill hut had been made uninhabitable by burning it using animal tallow. The only remaining structures were a couple of badly damaged stone walls, so it was basically impossible to reuse.

The surviving bandits were dumbfounded and frightened by the one-sided slaughter and the spectacle of watching their former hideout, the windmill, fiercely burning. In those dead and hollow eyes, one couldn't see the hope of getting back on their feet, let alone trying to take revenge.

"Also, it was decided that we will welcome the orphans of the Han clan here in Urd Village."

"What a... so that happened to the Han clan of the grasslands..."

"Urd would never abandon those in need."

"Truly a merciful person, Yamato-dono."

As for this matter, it was welcomed more than Yamato had thought.

The Han clan orphans were caught by the windmill bandits. And were just one step away of being sold as slaves after their parents were slaughtered.

Yamato had made the selfish decision of bringing them to the village of Urd. And while the consent of the village chief and the children themselves was obtained, it was still unknown how would the rest of the villagers react.

"Right now, the young Liscia and some of the women are having the Han clan children eat breakfast..."

"We should let them use some of the empty houses..."

"Let's have the women take care of them until they get used to the life in the village..."

To Yamato's surprise, the old villagers were instead talking about how to approach the situation, and future course of action. The people of Urd were seemingly very tolerant to immigrants.

After all, historically they too migrated to this mountain basin after being wanderers for a while. That made them have a generous heart.

And Yamato hoped this would be the same for the children, since he himself was warmly welcomed before.

"Well, this would be all. I hope we can keep working together, everyone."

And so, with those words from the village chief, the curtain closed on the morning meeting.

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“Liscia-san, how are the Han children doing?”

“Good morning, Yamato-sama! Right now, they are doing fine, they are finishing eating breakfast.”

After the meeting ended, Yamato decided to visit Liscia.

She, along with the old women of the village, were currently taking care of the Han orphans.

Yamato came to check on the children and see how they were doing.

“There’s still a lot of food left. Don’t worry and eat slowly.”

“Ahh... Its Yamato-onii-sama. Once again, thank you very much for what you did.”

“Don’t worry about it. Just keep eating.”

After seeing Yamato, a girl from the Han clan stood up and went to dutifully greet him. She was the late Han clan leader’s only daughter and had apparently become the leader figure among the orphans.

The way she called him, ‘Yamato-onii-sama’, was picked up from hearing the way the children and Liscia were calling Yamato. Although, it made Yamato feel embarrassed at such politeness.

“Seems like everyone is looking better today.”

“Yes! Yamato-onii-sama... Such a delicious meal, this is the first time everyone has had something like this.”

“That is ‘rice’ porridge. It is good for the digestion.”

“Rice porridge... it’s my first time eating it! ”

“Its good you like it.”

The state of the orphans while they were inside the windmill was terrible. Especially, since no meals were given to them, they had eyes like a dead fish and were sunk in despair.

Yesterday, after returning to the village, they were given a warm meal and took a bath. It was at that point that they finally started to truly feel relieved. And after a good night of sleep, their physical and mental strength were somewhat restored.

Now this morning, the children were cheerfully eating with gleaming eyes.

"Like I said yesterday, if you want, you can live here in Urd Village. But in exchange for that, you'll have to help with the work after you feel better"

"Truly thank you very much... and of course, we will help in every way we can and serve with sincerity so to not soil the name of the Han clan, Yamato-onii-sama! "

"No need to be so stiff. Being informal is fine."

Apparently, the Han clan children had a very serious personality. 'Serve with sincerity' wasn't something a child would normally say.

But those who would work seriously were very welcomed.

After all, there was still a long way to get the village back on track with the food production, and anyone who wouldn't work had no right to complain about meals.

"By the way... sorry if it is too much to ask but... Yamato-onii-sama, I need a favor."

"What is it?"

After putting down her spoon, the Han clan chief's daughter spoke with a serious look on her face.

She had an important request. And obviously, Yamato was willing to listen to it.

"Actually, there's something of a 'memento' of our clan... I would like to have Yamato-onii-sama take us retrieve them! "

"A 'memento' huh? Yeah, I see no problem."

And so was the request of the Han clan girl.

It was a 'memento' valuable as the same as their lives among the Han clan, and was left behind after having their families slaughtered.

A few days after the children's physical condition was fully restored, they decided to leave once again Urd Village.

# Chapter 25

## Treasures of the Han clan

After being asked by one of the newest members of the village, the girl from the Han clan, Yamato and others departed from the village in order to find the ‘mementos’.

“Do you know exactly where this thing we’re looking for is? “

“Yes, Yamato-nii-sama. It should be a little further ahead from the windmill hut.”

“I see, alright, just a little more then.”

With the Han clan chief’s daughter leading the way, everyone went past the now ruined windmill cabin and proceeded to their destined location.

The group was comprised of Yamato, Liscia and some of the children of the Han clan who had regained their strength. There was no particular danger the current group couldn’t cope up with, so the crossbow squad was made to wait at the village.

“How are you feeling?”

As they continue their travel on foot, Yamato became a little worried about the Han children.

“Thank you for your concern, Yamato-nii-sama. But no need to worry, the Han clan lives and runs through the grasslands from an early age. We’re all confident in our strength.”

“Ok, it’s good to hear that.”

After several days passed since their rescue, the orphans had become very energetic as they had rested in Urd Village.

And currently, after walking for several hours they still had strength left. *A tribe that lived in the grasslands sure is strong.*

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“Yamato-nii-sama, it’s around here... the place.”

“I see.”

They reached a small meadow at the basin of a mountain, guided by the Han clan girl.

It was a place so far away from Urd Village, Liscia said it was her first time coming this far.

“Alright, I’m going to call for them... I hope this goes well.”

As she said those words, the Han clan girl took out a small whistle that was hanging from her neck. Imitating her, the other kids also took a similar whistle.

“Fiiiiiiiii—”

As they blew it, a faint sound echoed. This whistle was said to be a clan secret and produced a sound that people couldn’t really hear.

Perhaps comparing it with a dog whistle, which produced a sound at a frequency at which people couldn’t perceive, would be better.

Even to Yamato, with his physical ability and improved five senses gained from coming to this world, it sounded like a barely audible sound.

Several more times, the Han clan children continued to blow the whistle. Yamato could only guess that there was a meaning in the rhythm and timing at which the whistle was blown.

It happened until after they had waited for about an hour in the meadow.

Their precious ‘mementos’ came.

“Are those the ‘mementos’ you were speaking of?”

“Yes! I’m really glad they are all safe... ”

The Han children stared at ‘them’ as they came closer with a look of relief.

“Those are Han horses...”

“It seems so.”

Next to Yamato, Liscia was staring at such sight wearing a surprised look.

What the Han clan orphans were looking for were these ‘horses’, cherished by the clan the same as their own lives.

“Amazing... I’ve heard rumors, but to actually see a Han horse...”

“Are they really that well-known?”

“Yes, Yamato-sama. They are the most famous of the three major breeds of horses in the continent.”

Just like Liscia explained to Yamato, the Han horses were a rare breed of large horses.

Knights and generals all over the continent usually choose them due to them being excellent horses. Their reputation was high, due to them being expensive war horses, and one usually had to spend a fortune just to get hold of one of these.

However, to the grassland people, they were similar to a member of their family. That was the main reason of their scarce numbers on the markets, making them quite rare.

It was a common saying that after knowing how much one costed, your eyes popped out of their sockets.

*Truly, big and sturdy horses... and they’re very beautiful too.*

Yamato also felt impressed as he watched over the scene of multiple brown Han horses gathering one after the other.

He remembered the times when he traveled the world with his self-proclaimed adventurer parents. At those times, he had the opportunity to see several countries’ fine horses and had practical experience in horse riding.

However, this was the first time he saw such a beautiful fine horse.

[A fine horse will always be a beautiful one] Was something he had gathered from his experience.

“Yamato-nii-sama!! “

It was then.

“Run away! “

The Han girl shouted loudly, warning him.

“Look out! A raging horse! You both need to escape! “

A Han horse was running, heading straight towards the place where Yamato and Liscia were standing. Its body was a size bigger than that of the other horses, and its temperament was visibly rougher.

Perhaps because it was its first contact with a person in a long time, it was in a state of frenzy.

Or maybe it was because it recognized them not as members of the Han clan and had assumed they were enemies.

*This is bad...*

Theirs was currently a dangerous situation.

Yamato would probably be able to avoid it due to his improved physical ability, but he worried about the person standing next to him, Liscia.

If she were to take the full impact of the horse's massive body, it would end very bad for her. Even her life might be in danger.

*It can't be helped then...*

Making up his mind, Yamato decided to go forwards in order to protect her from the horse.

“Yamato-nii-sama! You both need to escape! “

“Yamato-sama! “

The sorrowful cries of Liscia and the children echoed across the meadow.

However, he headed straight towards the big horse without paying any mind. All in order to attract its attention towards him.

“Neigh!”

In order to trample the stupid and tiny human in front, the huge horse swung its thick front legs. Its hooves were weapons that could even instantly kill carnivorous animals.

“Haa! “

However, after dodging the front leg, Yamato jumped on the big horse.

Having no saddle nor a leash, his was a dangerous situation. He had to cling desperately in order not to be shaken off.

“NEIGH! “

And sure enough, the horse became angrier as he rampaged in order to shake Yamato down. It even rolled on the ground to crush its unwanted rider.

“Yamato-nii-sama! “

“Yamato-sama! I’ll help you! “

“Wait! “

He spat those words in order to calm down Liscia who was preparing her bow.

Since this huge horse was probably the leader of the pack, hurting it would probably hurt the relation between them and the horses in the future.

“NEIGH! NEIGH!! “

The jet black huge horse rage continued as it couldn't shake off Yamato and kept going wild.

*Ugh...*

Similar to a rodeo bull machine, Yamato's body was experiencing the shock of the intense centrifugal force.

Moreover, he had no saddle or rope to hand on to as he was riding it on its bare back. If he were to lose focus for a moment, his life would probably be in danger.

*I won't give in...*

But regardless of his looks, Yamato wasn't one to accept defeat.

So, he kept on struggling, betting on who would break first.

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The violent battle finally came to an end.

The loud neighing from a while back was nowhere to be heard now.

“No way... to be able to ride the Ouba...”

“Yamato-sama! I’m glad you’re ok.”

After everything ended, Liscia and the children rushed up to Yamato.

The jet-black horse finally admitted defeat and had calmed down. It apparently now saw Yamato as its master.

“Amazing, Yamato-nii-sama! That giant horse is called Ouba, or King horse, and not even the fiercest among the clan members could ride it...”

“No wonder, he really is tough.”

While his body was full of sweat, Yamato calmly answered.

He still had strength to spare, but nevertheless it was a battle of perseverance and wits.

*It's not something I would want to do again to be honest.*

"Yamato-nii-sama, I never expected you to be so good at horse riding... you were wonderful! "

"Thanks, but I'm not really a proper rider. For now, let's return to the village."

"Yes! "

And so, they managed to fulfill the Han girl's request, and succeeded in securing a group of Han horses, the children's 'memento'.

Therefore, while guiding over twenty beautiful horses through the meadow, they triumphantly returned to Urd Village.

# Chapter 26

## A preparation with kindness

Some days had passed after everyone had returned from the meadow with the horses. Currently, the remote village of Urd was in the middle of the Inahon plantation process, a grain very similar to rice.

“Yamato-niichan, is this space enough between the plants? “

“It seems you still can’t get the feeling right. We’ll plant it in a straight line, a bit more separated.”

“Is that so? “

“If it’s too close the yield will be reduced. Or saying it differently, the amount of food to eat will be lower.”

“Oh, that would be bad. I have to fix it! “

Since everyone in the village was experiencing planting rice for the very first time, Yamato was the on-site supervisor giving appropriate instructions to everyone helping.

And although he was prepared and practiced the explanations in advance, he still struggled with those that couldn’t get the proper hang of rice planting.

“Yamato-nii-sama, is this okay? “

“Yes, good work. You’re pretty good at it.”

“Thank you very much, Yamato-nii-sama! The Han clan has long lived in the grasslands. So, we are fairly used to handling grasses.”

“I see.”

Among those helping were the children of the Han clan, they had now become new inhabitants in the village. And apparently since they were used to living in the meadows, they were skilled at rice planting.

From the time they were born, they were surrounded by horses, and had always handled and taken care of them. In such an environment, grass was also a part of their job.

“Yamato-dono, please come check at our work.”

“Oh, it is nicely done. But please, don’t push yourselves too hard, Village Chief.”

“No problem, so far it has been easier than with the barley, Yamato-dono.”

“I’ll be counting on you then.”

The elderly men and women of the village were also participating in the planting process.

Similar to harvesting, the planting was made by hand and it was the most labor-intensive and time-consuming process in the rice farming. Therefore, Yamato had told the elderly people not to overdo it.

*I wonder if it's my imagination... But it feels like they are livelier recently...*

When he first came to the village, the old people rarely did any job requiring physical strength.

However, in recent months, the elderly people felt much more energetic than at first. This was probably due to them eating a nutritious diet in a stable manner that they slowly were recovering their shaved off strength.

*If this is the case, then it's a happy miscalculation, they sure will be more reliable in the future.*

The Inahon planting occupied a large area that encompassed the natural paddy fields and the reclaimed damaged fields in the village.

All the villagers were cooperating and steadily working.

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Then several days after the planting started.

“Great, the planting is now finished. Good job everyone.”

The Inahon planting, a process in which all the villagers took part in, was finally completed. And so, Yamato addressed the tired and muddy villagers, signaling its completion.

“I planted the last one. I’m pretty amazing, aren’t I? “

“You’re wrong, the last one was planted by me.”

“No, no, we were the ones planting the last one, since the place designated for the Han clan was the one farther away.”

“Ehh, not fair, that’s cheating...”

As the hard labor of planting ended, everyone felt quite exhausted.

However, a smile was plastered on each of the villager’s faces as they felt filled with a sense of fulfillment.

“Alright kids, go wash off the dirt in the creek. Meanwhile the old women will most likely have already finished preparing a warm meal at the open plaza, so be sure to get back soon. Also, there will be no more work for today.”

Yamato instructed the children and told them about the schedule for the rest of the day.

“Oh! Lunch and a break! Alright, I’ll be the first one to get to the creek!”

“The Han clan won’t be defeated. Let’s see who’s the fastest.”

“Oh? If it doesn’t involve riding, there’s no way for us of Urd to lose a race! Bring it on! It’s a competition then! ”

“Hey, please, wait for me...”

Almost as if their earlier fatigue was a lie, all the children ran towards the creek at the same time, trying to be the first one to get there.

*Truly... children are just a mass of energy.*

At such a cheerful and mischievous scene, Yamato couldn’t help but to smile wryly in his mind.

“Seems like the children aren’t tired at all, Yamato-sama.”

“Yeah, it would seem so.”

The granddaughter of the village chief, Liscia, gazed together with Yamato at that pleasant sight.

To her, who had celebrated her fourteen birthday recently, the children reflected in her eyes were dazzling.

“You too, Liscia-san, after eating you can take the rest of the day off.”

“Yes, thank you very much for your words. And similarly, you will take the rest of the day off, right Yamato-sama?”

“Yeah, I plan to take thing slowly for today”

After working hard for the past few days, the villagers were forced to take the day off. Yamato had decided on such taking as example the customs of his grandmother's town back in Japan.

Forcing a holiday in order to restore the energy used during the rice planting, and with a second purpose of deepening the friendship among the villagers in Urd.

After joining hands in order to complete a taxing job together, a sense of solidarity was born and, in this way, their relationships deepened.

Especially, this was planned by Yamato in order to break the wall that still remained between the villagers and the new inhabitants, those of the Han clan.

“But, the children are already getting along pretty well, Yamato-sama.”

“That's true, but I can't say if it's because they adapt faster, or just because they are more simple-minded.”

Not paying any heed to the concerns of some adults, the children of Urd had already become very good friends with the children of the Han clan.

Because they were children, they had no preconceptions or pride like the adults, which made it easier for them. They were just being straightforward, like they always were.

“Well then, let's go get some lunch, Liscia-san.”

“Yes, Yamato-sama.”

After a final check on the fields, everyone headed for the plaza.



Everyone was excited and happy at the small party made to celebrate the completion of the rice planting.

“Today we made a lot of these ‘Onigiri’, there's plenty so eat your fill.”

“Oh! ‘Itadakimasu’!”

“Yeah, ‘Itadakimasu’! “

Everyone was happily enjoying the lunch prepared by the old women during the morning.

It appeared like Yamato’s custom of expressing his thanks by saying ‘Itadakimasu’ before eating, and the ‘onigiri’ had already permeated the hearts of the villagers.

The children swarmed towards the food almost as if they were competing.

“Yamato-dono, would you like another cup? “

“Sure, I’ll take it.”

On the other hand, the elderly people who were seated in the upper part of the plaza, healed their tiredness with a cup of liquor. Today being a feast to relieve the tiredness, the ban on the precious liquor was lifted.

Yamato didn’t dislike alcohol, but he wasn’t a big fan of drinking during daytime, so he kept it to a minimum.

“Gaton-dono, you too, please have another cup.”

“Thanks, I’ll gratefully accept it. Village Chief.”

Next to Yamato, the old blacksmith of the Mountain Clan, Gaton was also relaxing. Although he had not participated in the rice planting, Gaton was also busy working on a number of newly asked tools that Yamato had requested.

“Even so, this ‘rice planting’ seems quite taxing, and somewhat inefficient.”

“Precise planting can only be done manually. There’s no other way than to do it like that.”

“Uhm, even you being the ‘Sage-dono’, don’t you have some wisdom to increase the efficiency? “

“I think it would be a very complicated tool to have the Wild Oxen pull, you want to try?”

“Nah, I’ll refrain this time. Right now, I feel like I don’t have enough hands to complete your requests.”

“Makes sense.”

A tool to make rice planting, which was a heavy work, more efficient was difficult to produce.

In Japan, manual rice planting was the technique used until the rice transplanted appeared.

And with the current degree of civilization in this world, the technical ability needed to be raised before a rice transplanted could be properly made. Therefore, Yamato's choice was to keep using manual planting for the time being.

"By the way, the 'custom bow' you asked me to make will be completed soon."

"Oh, fast as always. As expected of Gaton-jii-san."

"Even if you praise me. Well, it's just a simplified version of the young lady's Marionette Bow. It was easy."

"Certainly."

Recently, Yamato had requested a tool to Gaton, which he asked him to give priority. It was a tool for hunting designed for the children of the Han clan, who had recently become new residents in the village.

After designing a new bow to match the characteristics of the Han clan, who were natural-born riders, he had Gaton make a prototype.

*I'm really looking forward to see the finished product.*

"Yamato-nii-sama..."

It was then.

A small voice was calling to him from behind.

"What's wrong? Did something happen?"

A girl a little younger than Liscia had come to speak with him.

She was a girl good at drawing and painting who now had a job similar to a village secretary.

Coming to speak to Yamato with a piece of paper in hand, he assumed there was some sort of problem. So, he tried to ask in a kind tone.

"Actually... there is a problem with the inventory at the food storage..."

"I see... that's bad news. Alright, I understand. Let's go see the food storage."

In order to check on the current 'problem' with his own eyes, Yamato left his seat and went towards the storehouse.

# Chapter 27

## A Matter of Life or Death

Following after the report of the painter girl, who had been entrusted with the task of working as a village secretary, Yamato went together with her towards the food storehouse located in the center of the village.

In total, there were three people there to check on the situation: Yamato, Liscia, and the painter girl.

“I see, this certainly is a problem.”

“I’m sorry, Yamato-nii-sama...”

“Don’t worry, it’s not your fault Chloë. This is something that couldn’t be helped, and you really were of help for spotting it.”

“Thank you... Yamato-nii-sama.”

Towards the depressed girl acting as secretary, Yamato patted Chloë’s head as he said those words in order to cheer her up.

After all, she was not to blame nor take responsibility for the current problem. Rather, he felt he should praise her for noticing this issue earlier than anyone else and reporting it. Therefore, he decided to compliment her properly.

“Certainly, the salt stockpile has been reduced a lot, Yamato-sama.”

“Yeah. At this rate, it will be gone faster than planned.”

The problem was the amount of salt stockpiled in the village storehouse.

And by Yamato’s estimations, the day the salt stock would run out in the village was not so distant.

“Shortage of salt”

This was the current and most urgent problem in the village.

This was because Urd Village was located in a basin surrounded by mountains. It was a great location, but its downside was the long distance to the sea, making it difficult to procure salt.

[People can’t survive without salt] This was a serious problem, be it Earth or any other

world.

Last autumn, when Yamato pledged to rebuild the village, one of the first things he did was to confirm the amount of salt stored.

*[The village has a fair amount of salt stored.]*

And during that same autumn, the village chief's granddaughter, Liscia explained to him about the current state of the salt in the village.

The salt was managed by the village chief, and it was distributed to the villagers regularly.

Since salt was also a valuable article, it was kept hidden under the false floor of the storehouse.

This was the reason the village still had salt, since it luckily escaped the thieving hands of the food collectors of the evil Feudal Lord last year.

“I was sure it was being rationed properly...”

“The salt is always used, Liscia-san. It can't be helped.”

However, the problem came to light after Yamato did the calculations today.

No matter how hard he tried to save up on salt, the village's stock will be gone not far in the future.

“It is probably due to the change in the feeding habits and the increase of the population in the village.”

“Indeed... that seems to be the case, Yamato-sama.”

*But this time, I'm also to blame for this.*

*I didn't get a proper grasp on the food culture of the people of Urd. And there's also the issue with the large amount of salt used for preserving the meat.*

*I suppose that is the case, since in this world without freezers, 'salting' is the common sense. Still, for my calculations to be this off...*

In this medieval-like world, salting the meat to preserve it was the popular practice. It was used for everything, from the fishes caught in the river, to the meat of beasts killed in the forest.

Especially, a large amount of salt was used to preserve the meat of the Big Rabbits and Wild Boars in these past months.

Apparently, Yamato's solution to quickly solve the food shortage situation had backfired. However, this couldn't be helped in a world without a refrigerator.

So, rather than regretting his decisions, he decided to try and explore another way to solve this problem.

“So far, the village has been buying the salt, right?”

“Yes, we’ve been buying it from the peddler, but...”

As Liscia said, in a mountainous place far away from the sea like this, salt had to be bought from the outside.

And up until now, the peddler who regularly came to the village, sold them salt at a very high price. It was traded with the coins they earned by selling the village’s special products.

“But with the big bandit group lurking on the highway, the peddlers have stopped coming, right?”

“Yeah... and thanks to those bandits, we couldn’t even go to the town to secure food for the village...”

One of the problems the village had was the fact that it was a completely isolated settlement.

A large-scale bandit group had been appearing along the highway connecting Urd Village in the mountains to the nearest town.

That dangerous armed group attacked people and carts equally. The scale was said to be many times larger than the group of bandits Yamato and the other had confronted recently and it was apparently the size of a small army.

And the neighboring Feudal Lord didn’t seem to care enough to dispatch his troops to such a remote location, to this place infested with bandits.

“Let’s leave for later the issue of suppressing the bandits. For now, we need to focus on finding a way to secure salt.”

The hideout of the bandit group was quite the distance away from Urd. Like the other thieves, the probability of them deciding to attack this remote village was quite low. So, for now, they had to find out a different way to obtain salt, one more reliable than use the highway to trade.

*How to get salt...*

The need for salt was also remarked throughout the history of Earth. Rather, it was not an exaggeration to say that the history of salt was closely linked to the history of

humankind.

From the primitive ages where humans lived solely by hunting, the needed salt was obtained from the animal's internal organs and the spinal cord.

After mankind settled and learned to get salt from natural deposits or refining it from sea water, the population developed and started to explode.

Since then, salt began to become a high-priced article and in the older times, countries monopolized it and placed enormous taxes on it in order to profit from its trade.

*Urd is among mountains... far away from a sea...*

If there was a source of seawater nearby, Yamato could use his knowledge and refine as much salt as he wanted.

But nothing similar could be done in this basin, with no coasts nearby.

*So, I need to get salt from another... no, wait a second.*

It was then.

He remembered something he saw. A certain memory in this village was revived suddenly.

“Liscia-san, Chloë. For now, keep the matter of the salt a secret. I think I might have a solution.”

“Is it true? Yamato-nii-sama! ”

“We'll leave it to you then, Yamato-sama.”

The two girls, whose face had become sullen after noticing the alarming problem suddenly cheered up after hearing Yamato's words.

The salt situation was a delicate problem, and something the villagers aside from the Village Chief didn't have the need to know for now.

“Ok then, I'll go take a walk for a bit.”

Leaving the two girls in the food storehouse, Yamato decided to visit a person who might have a solution for the salt situation.

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“Apparently, he’s home.”

After walking through the village square, Yamato reached the place where the person he was looking for was.

Noise could be heard from the building, signaling that its owner was inside.

“I’m coming in, Jii-san.”

“Oh, it’s you kid. Have you come up with a new interesting blueprint?”

The place he decided to visit was the blacksmith workshop. And the person he was looking for was the old man from the Mountain Clan, Gaton.

“What’s wrong? what is it with the long face?”

“Actually, there’s something I want to ask you, Jii-san”

“Hmm? What is it?”

Although Yamato tried to have a neutral expression, it was easily seen through by Gaton.

With the salt being a matter of life and death, he was probably a little too impatient.

“I want to know what ‘that’ is.”

“That...”

Pointing at the red crystal sculpture on a shelf of Gaton’s workshop, Yamato asked. And after that, it was Gaton who was lost for words. What Yamato wanted to know was where to find it.

“Is that... a crystal of rock salt? ”

“Yeah, like you said.”

He remembered the sculpture, Yamato saw it when he first came. He remembered the red crystal, this rock salt crystal.

“ [The Mountain Clan People know the secrets of the mountains]... right?”

“Yeah, that’s right, but... ”

The Mountain Clan were stubborn people, they only used metals and rocks they

gathered by themselves or by their own clan.

*In other words, Gaton should know where this rock salt came from.*

“But... ?”

However, for some reason, Gaton's words were unclear. Apparently, there were some circumstances.

Nevertheless, this was a matter of life or death, so Yamato decided to keep pushing.

“That rock salt crystal... I picked it up from a rock salt mine near here... ”

“What? Is there a rock salt mine nearby?”

“Yeah... but, now nobody can get close to that mine... ”

The usually obstinate and fearless Gaton answered with a murmuring voice that seemed to disappear at the end.

This was the first time Yamato had seen Gaton with such a frightened expression.

“Please tell me. I want to know.”

And so, Yamato asked about the circumstances of the old blacksmith Gaton.

# Chapter 28

## Gaton's Old Story

Regarding the circumstances surrounding the problem in the rock salt mine near Urd Village, Yamato inquired Gaton.

“Is there no rock salt left in the mine? Jii-san.”

“No... there’s still plenty there. It’s not an exaggeration to say that I estimate that mine to be one of the best rock salt reserves in the continent.”

“That’s great.”

Being who they were, the Mountain Clan people were also excellent miners.

Some of them worked as miners in different countries and were competent enough to the point of influencing the economics of those countries by the ores they collected.

And according to Gaton, a person belonging to the top ranks of the Mountain Clan, the reserves of rock salt left in the mine near Urd were still quite considerable.

That would be plenty enough salt to be used in this small village.

“Is the rock salt deposit owned by someone already?”

“No... the mine is now abandoned and it belongs to nobody... if I had to say, it would become the property of ‘the person who overcomes the trial’.”

“A trial?”

“Right...”

Yamato wasn’t one to beat around the bush while speaking. But just this once, he was paying close attention to every word in Gaton’s story.

This old blacksmith was a skilled craftsman, and an intelligent person.

But currently, this person was speaking ambiguously every time he opened his mouth.

"Then, let me be straight to you. The salt stock in the village is running dangerously low."

Therefore, he decided to tell the problem of the salt shortage without obscuring the truth. After all, Yamato trusted him.

"So that's why..."

After hearing the salt situation, Gaton quietly nodded to himself.

Then, after making up his mind, he continued with the story about the mine.

"The truth is, a 'spiritual beast' descended upon the salt mine..."

"A spiritual beast, you say."

"Yeah... a spiritual beast..."

The old craftsman Gaton then continued with the story in a low voice.

He said that roughly over a hundred years ago, the Mountain Clan People worked and mined in the salt mine. The salt obtained from that mine was high quality and it circulated across several parts of the continent.

He also said that in his younger days, he used to sometimes skip his smithing work and secretly go inside the mine.

"A hundred years ago?"

"Well, the Mountain Clan People live longer lives than normal people."

"I see."

But then, an incident occurred at such salt mine.

And that was the 'Spiritual Beast'——without warning, one day a spiritual beast suddenly appeared.

"Most of the Mountain Clan families that worked in the mine were slaughtered by the Spiritual Beast."

"I see."

"I was able to barely escape alive, but I was severely wounded while doing so. The next thing I knew, was that I had been treated and saved by the people of Urd..."

"So that's why you said you felt indebted to the people of Urd, huh?"

"Yeah, that's the reason..."

In this continent, mysterious animals called 'Spiritual Beasts' suddenly appeared.

Their appearances mimicked that of various animals, but not much was known about them. They had no regular patterns or timings, they simply appeared all the sudden.

Those who had been lucky enough to escape said the spiritual beasts were walking disasters who destroyed the land, and there was nothing one could do but to run away.

"Is there no way to kill it? Maybe with soldiers or an order of knights."

"That's impossible... the Spiritual Beasts carry a 'curse'..."

"What kind of 'curse'?"

It was said that the Spiritual Beast had abnormal strength, several times that of a normal beast, and possessed mysterious abilities.

And the most troublesome among them was the 'curse'.

A few decades ago, a city-state send an order of knights to try and subdue a Spiritual Beast that had appeared.

But when they engaged to Spiritual Beast, the knights went berserker and started to target each other, ending up being wiped out. And in addition to that, the city-state was also wiped out by a mysterious disease a few months later.

[The curse of a Spiritual Beast can bring the destruction of even a country.]

Since then, no nations or Feudal Lords have tried to put their hands on a Spiritual Beast. And decided on a policy of avoiding that existence until it naturally left.

“According to a legend, there was once a hero who defeated a Spiritual Beast in the past. It was said that in order to avoid the ‘curse’, he fought the Spiritual Beast alone...”

“In other words, one has to challenge the Spiritual Beast one on one?”

“Can’t say, for decades now... a hero like that hasn’t appeared...”

But with this, Yamato was able to grasp a general idea.

The animal called ‘Spiritual Beast’ had some sort of ability that made its opponents attack each other.

Therefore, trying to subdue it with a large number of people was impossible, and it depended on one individual’s fighting abilities to defeat it.

In addition, the combat abilities of the Spiritual Beasts were very high, and it was difficult even for a seasoned soldier or knight to be a proper opponent against them alone.

“That’s why it’s impossible to get the salt, even if there’s a mine full of it...”

The old Gaton looked towards the rock salt sculpture on the shelf as he muttered those words.

It was a family memento that he had struggled to take with him a hundred years ago.

Gaton had kept this article as a warning, to remind him of the danger and fear caused by the Spiritual Beast, and for him to not forget about those who passed away that day.()

“I understand what you’re getting to, yet...”

After a short silence, Yamato finally opened his mouth.

“I’ll leave after I’m ready. So please, show me where the entrance to the salt mine is located.”

“W-what!? Did you not listen to what I said! Kid!?”

Gaton was shocked after hearing Yamato's reply. He knew better than anyone how dangerous Spiritual Beasts were, even large countries could do nothing against them.

“I heard. All I'm asking is for you to guide me, if so you won't receive the ‘curse’.”

“This is not a time to be joking around...”

“You know I dislike jokes.”

“That's... true...”

Gaton hadn't known Yamato for a long time. However, he knew how honest and serious he had been up until now.

If that wasn't the case, he wouldn't have come up with the tools needed to rescue the village.

So, in a sense, Gaton was the person who knew Yamato the best.

“Do you think you have a chance at winning? ”

“If I feel I'm in danger I'll run away. Weren't you able to escape before? ”

“I guess so... I'll need seven days to prepare...”

“Alright. Then I'll leave the morning after the seventh day.”

Gaton said he needed time to prepare before departing.

And in a similar way, Yamato too wanted to have some time to prepare before leaving for the mine.

He wanted to hear more information about the Spiritual Beast in the rock salt mine. And wanted to prepare as best as he could in advance, before he had to challenge it alone.

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After leaving Gaton's house, Yamato gathered and told the circumstances to everyone in the village.

He honestly spoke about the salt issues, and that he was going to be fighting a Spiritual Beast to try and find a solution.

"Yamato-sama, that's too dangerous!"

"It's reckless! Nii-chan!"

Many objections rose against Yamato's dangerous plan.

However, after having everyone see that this was a last resort to help the village survive, everyone agreed.

"No matter how, but please be sure to come back alive."

Of course, they agreed on the condition that he would retreat if the situation became life-threatening.

*Still, I don't think the Spiritual Beast would let me escape so easily...*

His senses were telling him this would be extremely dangerous. And most likely, the Spiritual Beast wasn't such a forgiving existence either.

But he decided not to tell anyone about those thoughts.

And like that, soon the day of his departure came, the day he would go towards the rock salt mine.

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TN: Spiritual beasts are mythical creatures in the Chinese folklore.

# Chapter 29

## Towards the Rock Salt Mine

The day to challenge the Rock salt mine had finally arrived.

Guided by the Mountain Clan blacksmith Gaton, they left the village and safely arrived at the entrance of the rock salt mine without any problem.

“I remember that twin rock formation... after those is where the ‘curse’ of the Spiritual Beast was active.”

“Yeah, it gives off a strange feeling.”

As he came closer, Gaton remembered more clearly that time with the Spiritual Beast a hundred years ago.

It was past this place that the Mountain Clan families went mad under the influence of the ‘curse’, and mercilessly killed each other.

Approaching the place, Yamato’s body also started to warn him about the danger. From this point onwards, risk was sure to be encountered.

“Are you okay, Jii-san? your face is quite pale.”

“I’m ok... I’ve become stronger in these past hundred years.”

“Ok then.”

Taking deep breaths, Gaton regained his composure.

Even for him, a strong and stubborn craftsman, it took a hundred years to somewhat overcome his fear. That much was the horror caused by the Spiritual Beast.

“Is it really okay to be that lightly equipped, boy? ”

“Don’t worry, its fine.”

Uneasy about Yamato’s apparent lack of proper armor and weapons, Gaton anxiously voiced his concern.

Currently Yamato was equipped with a few knifes made in this world, his crossbow and bolts, and some ropes and other outdoor equipment.

He wasn’t even wearing some armor to protect himself.

“I chose to go like this after listening to your story, Jii-san.”

“I see... indeed, normal weapons and armor means nothing to a Spiritual Beast after all... ”

He had heard beforehand from Gaton about the characteristics of the Spiritual Beast inhabiting this rock salt mine.

Apparently, it had the appearance of a large quadruped animal, and had very quick movements.

*[In the blink of an eye, it disappeared from my eyes and suddenly it was walking behind me... ]*

In the incident a hundred years ago, the Mountain Clan warriors took a stand against the Spiritual Beast in order to survive.

Although their height is a little shorter than that of normal humans, the Mountain Clan People possess considerable strength.

Those warriors, armed with big hammers and tough metal armor, had battle abilities surpassing those of an order of knights.

However, the strong weapons they wielded in the battle were not effective, after they swung them the weapons bounced off inches away from the Spiritual Beast’s fur.

And on the other hand, the sharp claws of the Spiritual Beast tore and shredded their metal armor.

“Since the opponent is a highly mobile animal that can slash and tear metal. I guessed it would be better to have lighter clothes.”

“Hmm, I guess you’re right...”

Spiritual Beasts had strange abilities, and their tendencies and habits defied common sense.

Yamato didn’t tell Gaton, but he secretly had some other weapons prepared besides those, and they were hidden inside several of his pockets.

He wasn’t sure if some sort of understanding could be made with the Spiritual Beast, so it was best to be safe than sorry.

“It’s about time, I’m going. If something happens, protect the village.”

After doing some final check with Gaton, Yamato addressed those from the village, who obviously looked anxious.

“Yamato-sama, please be careful...”

“Yamato-niichan, you definitely have to win! “

“Yamato-nii-sama! “

Those voices belonged to Liscia, and some of the village and Han clan children.

Not all of the children had come, only a small portion of the older ones did, since they still needed to work in the village and keep the patrolling.

And in a similar way to Gaton, they had accompanied him to see him off up until that

place.

“Liscia, take care of the kids.”

“Don’t worry, leave them to me, Yamato-sama.”

*I’m worried that the children carrying crossbows will come after me into the cave,* Yamato thought.

Since there existed the risk of being manipulated by the “curse”, he wanted to keep them in check and follow his orders.

“Ya-Yamato-niichan... are you really going to go... ?”

“To me, it f-feels kind of dangerous... ”

The young, innocent children were trembling as if they were feeling something was off.

Yamato though this sensation was probably caused by the Spiritual Beast.

But with this he was surer of them not approaching closer than the twin rock formation.

The same was also true for the old Gaton and the hunter girl Liscia.

It was hard to put it in words, but it felt like just being there gave you a cold sweat, as if trying to endure something.

*This is probably too much for ordinary people, I doubt they’ll be able to enter the cave due to fear,* Yamato thought to himself.

“It will be fine. I’ll definitely come back.”

Saying those reassuring words to everyone, Yamato walked towards the inside of the rock salt mine.

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He carefully walked inside the dark passages.

“All things considered, this looks like a well-maintained tunnel...”

His voice was quiet, almost like a mutter, so as to not cause echo in the surroundings.

Although he already heard it from Gaton, he was surprised to see how well arranged the interior of the mine was, with tunnels made to be easy to move around.

The ground was flattened out and solid, almost like a modern sidewalk.

And on the side, there was a rail track with a mine cart, probably used to bring outside the mined rock salt.

“Where’s the light coming from? The moss, huh? Interesting.”

As he went further inside, the interior of the tunnel became dimly lit, giving off a gentle shimmer.

The reason for that was the faint glow of the light-emitting moss, a plant brought inside by the Mountain Clan People in order to light up the tunnels. Thanks to that, the visibility inside the tunnels was decently good without the need for torches or other forms of lightning.

“Being able to see so far into the distance is definitely thanks to the improvement of my senses.”

For Yamato, he wasn’t yet used to his sense improving. Ever since he came to this world and up to this day, his senses still kept on getting better as the days went on.

Although back in Japan, he could easily see the streets at night. This was a completely different feeling, since with only the dim light of the moss, he could see with no problems up to the end of the tunnel.

“...Oh, seems like there’s a large opening up ahead, is that the mining site?”

The structure of the rock salt mine was not a complicated one.

And it was even easier since he had gotten a detailed map from Gaton, and he had memorized it.

From the entrance, take the path straight ahead and keep going straight, those were Gaton's instructions. After that, the tunnel will go slightly down and you will arrive at the rock salt mining site.

*And that's where the Spiritual Beast is located,* Yamato said in his mind.

According to Gaton's story, the Spiritual Beast came to that place a hundred years ago. And because it rarely moved its resting spot, it should still be there at the bottom.

*Alright...*

As he approached the place where his target was supposed to be, Yamato strengthened his vigilance.

Unlike forest or mountains, a tunnel was a place with little to no places to hide.

On the plus side, it meant that the chances of running into an ambush by the opponent were low, but it also meant that he had no places to hide himself if he wanted to.

The moment he and the Spiritual Beast see each other, would probably also be the start of the fight. As he moved closer, he once again checked the tools and weapons he had.

*It might end after receiving a single hit... I just need to keep dodging and counterattack when I see a chance.*

The Spiritual Beast was said to be a quadruped, according to Gaton.

Therefore, he expected the movements to be fast enough to avoid a crossbow bolt. And planned to avoid at all costs its attacks that could tear and shred even metal armor.

*This will probably be the most difficult fight yet...*

He imagined it would be a carnivorous animal of a species he had never seen or heard before in the jungles and forests of Earth. Therefore, he assumed it would be a completely different animal, even if it resembled something he had seen.

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“Alright, I’ve arrived.”

While remaining wary, he reached the lowermost part of the mine.

The surroundings shone a faint tone of red as they reflected the light of the moss.

A beautiful sight was before him, almost like a painting, the rock salt crystals reflected the light and illuminated the surroundings with a red tint.

And along that sight, a chilly feeling and an eerie silence descended upon him. That bizarre silence dominated the area.

“Where’s the Spiritual Beast?”

He looked around carefully, but the figure of the Spiritual Beast was nowhere to be seen.

This was indeed the bottom part of the mine, and there were no rocks or places where someone or something could hide, but no matter how hard he tried, he couldn’t find signs of the beast.

*Could it be... that it already left?*

It had been already a century since the Mountain Clan People living here was attacked.

So, he thought that maybe the Spiritual Beast had already gone somewhere and left.

*No... there’s no sign of it, but... I can feel it...*

That ‘unpleasant feeling’ from before was still present.

A feeling similar to having the hair in the back of the neck stand up... like having a piece of ice pressed against the back... It was such an unpleasant feeling.

*Don’t trust your eyes... just feel it...*

He closed his eyes and focused his mind.

He focused his mind and body, letting the feelings flow, not paying attention to his sight nor hearing. This was a technique learned from his adventurer father.

*It's here...*

It was then.

He felt 'that' behind him. He finally found what he was looking for.

"...Seems like the leading actor finally decided to show up."

Taking a glance at his back, he saw a shadowy figure, the purpose of him coming here, looking straight back at him. Although both of them were still a distance away, 'it' clearly was showing no sense of alertness.

"So this is the Spiritual Beast... ?"

At the end of his gaze stood a jet-black beast.

A huge Spiritual Beast with two sharp and gleaming eyes, ready to strike down on the comparable small Yamato.

# Chapter 30

## Deathmatch against a Spiritual Beast

At the bottom of the rock salt mine, there stood Yamato, faced against the Spiritual Beast.

“It truly resembles a black tiger.”

After finally appearing before him, Yamato analyzed the appearance of the dangerous Spiritual Beast.

He had heard of its appearance from Gaton, so he instantly recognized it as the opponent he was looking for. Its outward appearance was reminiscence of one of Earth’s carnivore animals, the tiger.

“But... I can’t go thinking that, this is obviously a different being.”

At a glance, it looked just like a tiger similar to those of Earth.

However, the huge and sharp fangs that grew from its mouth, and the keen claws growing from its paws pointed that this was a totally different organism.

“Wouldn’t it be better to call it a ‘Saber tooth Tiger’?”

Accurately speaking, the Spiritual Beast resembled more that ancient animal from Earth. *It feels weird to actually be before that figure I once saw at a museum*, Yamato thought.

In order to keep himself calm, he started to speak to himself as he analyzed it. That way, he could objectively confirm the situation he was in.

“Why aren’t you suddenly attacking me?”

Since the Spiritual Beast appeared, it had only been staring at him.

Likely, it was measuring what level of threat Yamato posed. That ‘observation’ was a

habit of intelligent carnivorous animals.

“Grrrrrrr!”

Soon after, it seemed like the observation time was over.

Slowly taking steps, it started to advance towards Yamato. *I supposed it judged me to be ‘an adversary it could easily kill’, Yamato thought.*

“What a coincidence. I think so too.”

In a similar manner, Yamato’s ‘observation’ time had ended.

So, he too started to advance, walking towards the Spiritual Beast. He decided that he would ‘hunt down’ the black beast in front of his eyes.

“ROAR!”

“Let’s do it! ”

As both made up their mind, they kicked off the ground at the same time in order to attack the opponent.

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The battle with the black Spiritual Beast had finally begun.

“Guooaaah!!

The huge fangs of the Spiritual Beast targeted Yamato’s unarmored torso.

Its movements were swift and agile one wouldn’t believe it with that massive body, fast enough to even lose sight of it if Yamato were to blink. A quick attack making use of its enormous leg strength in order to overwhelm a person.

*No wonder the Mountain Clan People thought it simply vanished, he thought, if it was like this it’s no surprise it was a unilateral slaughter.*

“So fast! But...”

At the last moment, he avoided the enormous fangs trying to rip him. Shifting his weight, Yamato bended his body and slipped through a blind spot of his opponent.

And at the same time, holding a knife with both hands, he aimed at the unprotected neck of the Spiritual Beast.

“GUOOO!”

“Damn, I won’t... !? “

Feeling an impending sense of danger, he canceled his attack and simply avoided altogether.

A second after, the huge, sharp claw of the Spiritual Beast cut through the spot where he was standing just now.

*If I pressed on the attack, my head would have been totally torn open, cold sweat ran through his back as he was having those thoughts. The counter attack of the Spiritual Beast was that much frightening.*

“But at least, its full of gaps! “

As he continued to avoid, he threw the knives he was wielding at the beast. His aim was to defeat the Spiritual Beast by damaging its seemingly thin-skinned side flank. Pulling out a spare knife, he moved on to the next attack.

“GROAAAAAA!”

After avoiding the thrown knives, the Spiritual Beast let out a sonorous roar and charged.

“Not yet! “

But its quick movements were also within Yamato’s calculations.

He immediately avoided it and moved towards its back again, attacking with a knife in both hands.

But being a quadruped animal gave it advantage in stability in a ground battle.

However, the movement of the joints were limited, so there was always a direction in which it was hard to react to. And Yamato persistently aimed for that.

“GUAAAAAA”

“Damn! “

Nevertheless, the Spiritual Beast instantly positioned and fought back the attack that was coming from behind. Kicking up its back legs, he launched its sharp claws trying to cut the tender meat in Yamato’s body.

“Crap, I knew it would be different from ordinary animals. But still! “

He continued to move around, relentlessly attacking the Spiritual Beast without giving it time to rest.

But the Spiritual Beast too responded with unbelievable reflexes and was pressing on.

*It really is abnormal... but, I think I have a chance...*

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The strategy he had decided on was to continuously attack the opponent without letting it get time to rest.

After all, his senses and physical abilities had been improving since coming to this different world.

But since he was living with everyone at the village, he never tried to use all his strength.

However, the improvement he had seen was quite remarkable. And it was only thanks to that, that he was able to fight against the Spiritual Beast on equal grounds.

*Its strength and attacks are top notch. However, this is not an opponent I can't win against...*

Up until now, all the warriors and Knight squads that faced against a Spiritual Beast were destroyed.

But its movements reflected a lower grade of intelligence than humans.

Its speed and reflexes were extraordinary. However, it lacked ‘technique’.

*I'm impressed by the training drilled to me by those self-called adventurer parents of mine, he thought, thanks to that I'm able to cope up with the movements of this Spiritual Beast.*

During those frantic days, he had to fight against his father in what appeared to be deadly bouts, but now he appreciated those days.

*Alright, if it keeps going like this, in a couple more exchanges...*

As both of them continued their monotonous offense, Yamato was slowly laying a trap.

And in order for the other party not to notice, he tried to let out as little hints as he could.

So, while measuring the terrain in the mine, and checking the lightning intensity let out by the shinning moss, he was waiting for ‘that moment’.

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“Grrrrrr!”

The Spiritual Beast, who had been numbed due to Yamato’s relentless attacks suddenly launched an unexpected attack.

Using a speed faster than the one it had been using up until now, it dashed towards him.

It felt as if it was now used to Yamato’s moves.

Using its sharp and huge fangs, the attack came at a speed at which Yamato couldn’t react. It was a powerful and savage deadly blow, the very essence of a wild beast.

“Hah... I was waiting for it! “

Looking at the incoming and terrifying Spiritual Beast, he spat out those words. This was the moment and position he was aiming for.

“First of all, the eyes! “

It happened a second after those words.

A bright, silver light shone, explosively illuminating the bottom of the mine. The space that was previously dimly lit by the light moss, was filled with an explosion of pure white light in a single moment.

“Guuuuu!”

Reacting towards the unexpected blast of light, the Spiritual Beast faltered and stopped for a moment.

“Now, the throat! “

It was only for a moment... but Yamato wasn't kind enough to let that chance pass.

Diving into the Spiritual Beast, he slashed at its unprotected throat. His attack aimed at that respiratory organ, and it successfully landed, completely severing it.

“And lastly, the brain and heart! “

He continued to press on against that opponent that could no longer breathe.

Holding out two crossbows, he aimed at the skull and heart of the Spiritual Beast, successfully landing both bolts.

This was his trump card, one that he had kept hidden until this last minute. With its impressive destructive power, both bolts pieced through.

“Sorry. But I couldn't afford to hesitate.”

He threw those words at the corpse of the Spiritual Beast that now lied on the cold ground at the bottom of the mine.

This was the least he could say to the other party, to the beast he had challenged in battle.

*It paid off to add the 'Improved Flash' to the stun baton, and the spare crossbows I had Gaton make.*

His trump card this time was a defense weapons he had brought from Japan.

With the flash made from a modified digital camera, the Spiritual Beast was robbed of its vision. And since it was used to live in this dark area, it probably couldn't understand what had happened.

Then, he cut its throat with the knife and used the stun baton's electric shock at the same time to stop its movements.

And lastly, was the attack from two crossbows.

*It might have been unfair, but since the start this was not a fair fight,* he thought.

He was putting his life on the line after all, and his opponent was a Spiritual Beast.

“Ok...”

After piercing the Spiritual Beast, he took some distance just in case.

After reloading and once again pointing the crossbow at the Spiritual Beast, he kept his distance as he watched his opponent go into cardiopulmonary arrest.

After all, his opponent was a Spiritual Beast. It might have a different physiology than ordinary animals.

“I did it... I guess.”

He waited for what felt to him like ages.

But in the end, the Spiritual Beast remained unmoving.

It had its throat completely cut off, and with its brain blown off and heart pierced, it was finally killed.

“It truly was a tough opponent...”

After relaxing a bit, he left out a sigh of relieve.

He had to maintain his high concentration all this time and was on the offense until the very last minute.

The mental fatigue was kicking in more hardly than the physical exhaustion.

*If I had to fight for a little more time, I might have been in trouble*, he shuddered.

Although it seemed like a clean victory, truthfully speaking, this was a really close battle.

“Well then, let’s go outside and call everyone...”

The Spiritual Beast, the objective of this trip, was finally defeated.

And after confirming that there were no more dangers, they had to discuss the future use of the salt mine. *Seems like it will get busy again*, Yamato thought to himself.

“But first, I want to take a good rest today.”

He really was at the limit of his strength.

What he wanted to do now was to go back to the village and, after taking a good bath, simply lie down for the rest of the day.

After all, it wasn’t as if wings would sprout out of the mine and it would fly away.

“Haa...”

It happened after he let out that sigh of relief.

It was ‘that’ feeling again.

*No way...*

While having an ominous feeling, he slowly turned back.

“What a nonsense... could it be that it’s immortal... ?”

Before the exhausted gaze of Yamato was a ‘jet-black beast’.

With its skull and heart still blown away, the Spiritual Beast revived with a suspicious shine in its eyes.

# Chapter 31

## That Battle of Ours

Even with its vital points destroyed, the Spiritual Beast was revived, and its figure was at the end of Yamato's exhausted sight.

"Could it be that it's immortal... ?"

Calming his startled mind, Yamato tried to observe the other party carefully.

*I crushed its brain and pierced its heart, I also slit its throat and I'm sure it died,* Yamato was certain. Proof of that was that the ominous feeling emitted by the Spiritual Beast disappeared for a while.

However, that feeling... that aura was getting stronger and stronger now.

"Is this also a power related to the 'curse'...?"

*According to Gaton's story, the 'curse' has various effects on different Spiritual Beasts,* he remembered. *Maybe one of them is the ability to resurrect after being killed.*

It sounded like an unbelievable story, but that very scene was happening right in front of his eyes.

"If that's the case, then I just need to kill you once again! "

He was already a victory ahead.

So, what he tried to do now was to act, while securing his equipment.

*The knives can still be used.*

He slowly went around, towards the back of the Spiritual Beast who was unmoving after just getting up. *I will definitely finish it this time.*

But in the next moment, just as he tried to attack.

“Ugh!?”

Hit by a seemingly invisible force, his body was blown away.

Barely able to take a defensive position, he was knocked back and strongly crashed at the wall of the mining site.

\*cough\* “What was that just now... ?”

An unseen attack. One that he couldn’t react to even with his improved senses.

*I just felt like I received an invisible shockwave and being blown away, he thought.*

He could still somehow move his body, but it was obvious by the pain that some ribs were broken. It was thanks to his improved physical abilities that it ended that way, otherwise, it could have been a lethal strike.

“Were ‘those’...what attacked me just now... ?”

Something was seeping out of the Spiritual Beast’s body. Many jet-black tentacles were moving in the air, and an eerie light was coming out from its abdomen.

*Is that a power it obtained from resurrecting? Yamato wondered, that attack from the tentacle was truly terrifying.*

“What should I do... ?”

After taking some distance, Yamato tried to devise a plan.

It was obvious that the Spiritual Beast had become a completely different existence from the one he had just fought. It was nothing short of a monster.

After all, anything that moved after having the brain, heart and throat destroyed couldn’t be considered an animal anymore. It had come back to life thanks to some power that was beyond the comprehension of human intellect.

“Withdraw... ?”

That was probably the best choice considering the current situation.

Although he received some damage earlier, his body could still move. A tactical withdrawal was no problem for him even now.

As he chose to leave for now, he started to recover his equipment, and decided to challenge this Spiritual Beast on a different occasion.

“But, I wonder... will it really just let me leave... ?”

The place the Spiritual Beast was standing right now, was next to tunnel that lead towards the exit of the mine.

It moved towards that spot almost as if reading Yamato’s thoughts and cut off his way out.

So, in order to successfully escape, he had to sneak past it while avoiding the tentacle attacks and flee towards the exit while exposing his defenseless back.

“The odds aren’t really in my favor... ”

Even after calmly judging the situation he was in, he came to the conclusion that the probability of him surviving was quite low.

If it became a fight of endurance, there being no place to hide nor run, his opponent had an overwhelming advantage.

Therefore, even if his chances were low, he had no choice but to bet on trying to escape.

*Liscia... Gaton... everyone. I feel like I won't be able to fulfill the promise...*

He was already prepared for his own death.

So, in his mind, he apologized to everyone from the village who were waiting for him outside of the mine.

He wondered what would happen to everyone in the village if he were to die here.

*I think they should be fine for food for a while, so they should be able to survive, he thought.*

*But there is not enough salt in the village.*

So, anyone could guess what would happen to such a remote and isolated mountainous village after the salt ran out. But that was something he refused to accept.

“I take back my earlier words... I will definitely get out of here alive.”

He made up his mind while thinking about the future of the village.

He swore to himself that he would survive for the village’s sake, a village that was originally destined to be destroyed.

*But, how do I get out of this situation...*

Just as he prepared and started to think about a new plan...

It was then.

“Yamato-sama! Are you okay!?”

“Yamato-niichan!!”

“Yamato-nii-sama!”

From the upper levels of the mine, audible voices resounded throughout the cave.

“Liscia-san! Guys...”

The owners of those voices were those who came with him from Urd.

Those who were supposed to be waiting for him outside of the mine, were now coming to his location.

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“Ohh, what the heck is that!?”

“It’s giving off that bad feeling, I’m sure it’s the Spiritual Beast.”

The village children, who rushed to the lower lever, finally saw the figure of the sinister-looking Spiritual Beast. The black beast with tentacles drifting in the air was

now nothing short of a monster.

“Everyone, ‘two stage battle formation’, take positions! We will support Yamato-sama!”

But after hearing the orders from Liscia, the children regained their composure.

Remembering their battle experience while defending the harvest last year, they took positions almost instinctively.

The front row was holding shields that covered their entire bodies, and at the back the children were divided into two groups.

This was the ‘two stage battle formation’ that Yamato had taught the children.

“Hey, wait...”

The appearance of the children. Along with their sudden attack formation.

They took Yamato by surprise, so he was a moment too late to speak.

“Fire! ”

Along with the command of Liscia, the children fired a steady volley.

Metal-tipped bolts were shot one after the other by the powerful crossbows.

In order to overcome the loading time weakness, Yamato had devised that ‘two stage battle formation’. It was one-of-a-kind offensive force that could pierce metal armor and shields, as proved when they fought against the bandits.

And now, that heavy rain of bolts was attacking the defenseless Spiritual Beast.

“Guoooaaaa.”

An ear-deafening roar resounded inside the cave.

The crossbow team possessed a destructive force not found in this world. The Spiritual Beast had assumed that their fire power was nothing to be afraid of.

“Yeah! Take that! “

“Yamato-niichan, don’t worry, we got this! “

Convinced of their victory, the children rose their voices. They weren’t conceited, they had confidence, built from their hunting experiences so far.

No beast that had ever taken an attack by their ‘two stage battle formation’ had come out unscathed.

It was a formation they rarely used, since it excessively tore and minced the animal’s meat.

“Damn, everyone! Run away now! “

But those were the words Yamato shouted.

He told the children, who had a look of relief to escape. He wanted them to leave the mine quickly, to abandon him and escape themselves.

“Yamato-sama, what are you... ? Eh!? Shield squad! Three-point defense stance! “

*(TLN: Both feet on the ground, and shoving the tip of the bottom of the shield down too, making three points of contact to avoid being pushed back.)*

Liscia was the only one to respond, while the rest of the children were confused by Yamato’s instructions.

As soon as she gave those instructions, the shield team on the front row took a stance for defense.

“GUOOOOOOOOO!!”

The next instant.

Along with the monster’s roar, jet-black tentacles extended like a whip.

“Ugh! “

“Kyaa! “

In response to the attack by the monster's tentacles, the sorrowful cries of the children blown away echoed.

The counterattack by the tentacles came from a distance so far, they didn't expect it. And all the children were blown back, tumbling along the shield squad.

"Are you alright... ?"

"Uuu... "

"Ouch... "

With Liscia's quick judgement, the shields were up just in time.

However, even though they lessened the blow, the shields were currently in tatters.

If they were to receive a single more blow, just like the previous one, the life of the children would be in extreme danger.

"GOAAA!"

In order to unleash another strong attack, the Spiritual Beast was seemingly gathering power.

Judging the crossbow squad to be the most dangerous existence right now, it was trying to finish them off first.

*Crap! What should I do... !?*

Yamato was at loss.

What could he do right now? ... he didn't know.

Even after receiving the direct attack by the "two stage battle formation" earlier, the Spiritual Beast hadn't fallen. That was the strongest firepower in the village, himself included.

That meant that if that previous attack didn't work, an attack made by himself would not be able to pass through the Spiritual Beast's defenses either.

*Run away... ?*

As a commander, the correct choice would be for him to escape this place using this gap.

Some of the children would die as a result, but that would buy him some time to safely secure Liscia and the surviving children and return to the village.

And after that, it would be correct to rethink carefully the strategy, arrange the necessary equipment, and challenge again the Spiritual Beast... that would be the decision made by a cold-headed commanded.

*Am I a cold-headed commanded... ?*

Laughing to himself, he dismissed the words that floated in his mind.

“Hey...”

Along that word, he fired what he had in his right hand.

“Ugaaaa!?”

And as he expected, the attack did not reach the Spiritual Beast.

The jet-black tentacles surrounded it and became its shield almost automatically, preventing the attack. That was also what had guarded against the attack made by the crossbow squad.

But at least he succeeded in turning the attention of the Spiritual Beast away from the children.

“Sorry but... I still haven’t finished repaying their kindness... I can’t let you touch them!”

And along with that shout, he sprinted. His aim was the ‘bosom’ of the Spiritual Beast.

*There... if only I can reach its abdomen...*

It was the result of observation and intuition.

The presence of the light shining in the abdomen of the Spiritual Beast after it resurrected. Those black tentacles, and the eerie aura were coming off from that place.

So, he thought that it might be its core, the true identity of the Spiritual Beast——and its weak point.

*If I destroy it, I might be able to defeat the Spiritual Beast!*

“GUOOOOOOOO!!”

But it appeared like the Spiritual Beast was fully aware of its weakness.

Against that existence that was becoming more dangerous, it moved all its tentacles to attack.

Keen and strong tentacles were waving as they came to attack Yamato.

“Ugh, such hardness! “

As he was about to receive an attack, he used a knife to try and cut it. However, the blade bounced off due to the tentacle’s stiffness.

If he couldn’t do something against the tentacles, there was no way he could even get close.

It was then.

“Kid!! “

A rumbling scream echoed at the bottom of the mine.

“Jii-san! “

Raising his gaze, he saw Gaton running towards him. While holding a large, thick shield, he too was attacking the Spiritual Beast.

“Kid! Use ‘this’! It is my masterpiece! “

Together with that shout, something metallic was thrown from Gaton’s hand.

The place it would land was the middle point between Yamato and the Spiritual Beast. It was a weapon that could probably defeat the Spiritual Beast.

“GrrrrrrrAAAAOOOOOOOO!!”

But the Spiritual Beast too perceived it to be ‘something dangerous’ instinctively.

So, it tried to crush the weapon thrown by Gaton using one of its tentacles. It tried to prevent the ‘black-haired man’ from obtaining that dangerous weapon with all of its power.

“Stupid Spiritual Beast! We of the Mountain Clan People are also stubborn enemies!! “

Running towards the Spiritual Beast, Gaton yelled and charged full power with his shield.

A Mountain Clan person, with many times the strength and power of a human. The Spiritual Beast defended with its tentacles, but the charge of Gaton had the grudge built over a hundred years, so it made the Beast flinch as he received the blow.

“Crossbow Squad! Fire! “

Along with the dignified command of the hunter girl, a stream of bolts was fired, raining on the Spiritual Beast.

“Yamato-sama! Now! “

Helping the kids that could move, Liscia assisted with covering fire.

Their numbers were less than half of before, and their attacks took longer. Some of the children were hurt to the point where they couldn’t load the next bolt.

“But... that’s good enough.”

Yamato smiled at the current situation.

The charge attack by Gaton and the desperate attempt by the crossbow squad. Many of the tentacles were turning around to defend against those.

But some of those tentacles remained and would attack him. Terrifying tentacles that

couldn't be cut by his knife.

"With 'this'! "

Running, he grabbed the weapon thrown by Gaton mid-air. And using the momentum, he unsheathed the sword and confronted the tentacle that was about to strike him.

Gaton's masterpiece was a single-edged curved sword.

Unfortunately, Yamato had never trained in katana-style fencing.

But, he believed.

The sharpness of this sword cried 'masterpiece', made by one of the best and most famous blacksmiths in the continent, Gaton.

"Let's do it! "

And as he grasped the grip of the sword, he could feel it, the 'I can do it' feeling.

"HAAAAAA! "

Sweeping all the tentacles in front of him, he reached the bosom of the Spiritual Beast.

"With this... it will finally be over... "

And after swift slash, the core of the Spiritual Beast was cut.

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And thus he...

No, 'they', with the power of everyone, they succeeded in defeating the Spiritual Beast inside the rock salt mine.

# Chapter 32

## Premonitions of a New Season

Several months had already passed since they defeated the Spiritual Beast at the rock salt mine.

“Gaton Jii-san. Is the rock salt mining going well?”

“Yeah. As far as rocks and ores are concerned, leave it to the Mountain Clan. Kid.”

“Alright, I’m counting on you then.”

The operation of the rock salt mine, located a little away from Urd village was running smoothly.

According to Gaton’s reliable words, many elderly miners of the Mountain Clan were mining the rock salt.

Rumors that [the Spiritual Beast that lurked in the mine is gone] were transmitted through their own network, so they returned to their former homes, from all over the continent.

Those old miners were people who miraculously survived the incident of a hundred years ago, the same as Gaton. After that, they scattered all over the continent and decided to live quietly.

“The Mountain Clan People tend to cherish their birthplace, you know?”

“Even after a century has passed?”

“Yeah, that’s the meaning of home, boy.”

Those miners, like Gaton, were already old. But when they came back, they brought with them their children and grandchildren.

“As promised, you can use the food and living goods from Urd village.”

"Hmph, I know, just don't forget the alcohol."

"Let's consult the Village Chief on that."

Those of the Mountain Clan who came back were to settle and live in the outskirts of Urd.

Since it required special skills, the mining and processing of the rock salt was left to them. So, it became a mutualistic relationship, where the people of Urd provided their daily goods.

The people of Urd got the salt, and the Mountain Clan people got food and a place to live.

That joint life benefiting from each other had been going smoothly for these past months.

"By the way, am I really the owner of the rock salt mine, Jii-san?"

"Yeah. It was you who gave the final blow to the Spiritual Beast. No need to hold back."

"Ohh, so that's how it is."

Yamato had become the owner of the rock salt mine.

This was an absolute tradition in this continent -The new owner of a land where a Spiritual Beast had descended upon, would be the person who manages to kill it-. It wasn't possible to share the rights, so it became his since he was the one who stabbed it last.

"The mining and storing of salt should be carried out in strict secrecy."

"Yeah, this old man also thinks that would be for the best."

The rock salt mine, one of the biggest reserves on the continent had finally reopened for the first time in a hundred years. Therefore, Yamato decided to do it in total secrecy for now.

The large amount of mined rock salt was being kept in a tunnel that was locked behind a solid and sturdy door.

Also, the Mountain Clan People, who were stubborn and very honest, were suitable for mining the rock salt in secret.

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After returning to the village, Yamato decided to visit the village chief granddaughter Liscia.

“Yamato-sama, looks like the Inahon is growing without problems so far.”

“Good, being in a high altitude, Urd has fewer pests and diseases.”

“Ohh I see, Yamato-sama.”

The growth of the rice-like cereal called Inahon was also progressing smoothly.

After all, a village in a mountainous area was a suitable area for the cultivation of such crop. The temperature was more stable and there were just a few pests and crop diseases.

If everything went as planned, by autumn, the village fields will be filled with a golden carpet.

“Speaking of such... are your injuries all right now, Yamato-sama? “

“Yeah, no problem, sorry to worry you.”

“I’m really glad! “

Liscia was still concerned about the serios injuries Yamato had received by the Spiritual Beast several months ago.

He was the one who had suffered the most in the fight against the Spiritual Beast. Gaton and the children, luckily only received relatively minor injuries for the most part.

*I had several fractured ribs, and countless cuts and bruises throughout the body. But seeing how I am now, I feel like I recovered in no time...*

The wounds he received from the Spiritual Beast were not something he could laugh

off as something light.

However, thanks to his amazing recovery speed, with only ‘a few days of rest’ he was completely healed.

*I supposed this is also a benefit from my improved physical abilities...*

Probably, one of the side benefits from coming to this different world, was that his injuries healed unusually fast. It was several times that of a normal person.

But for the moment, he decided to keep that fact to himself. Because it was too abnormal anyway for others to believe.

“How about... the future policies of the village, Yamato-sama?”

“Ah, that’s right...”

While walking around the village, Yamato and Liscia discussed future policies.

The village chief was Liscia’s grandfather, but the planning was largely entrusted to Yamato and Liscia.

This decision was a consensus of the village chief and all the villagers, so there was no particular problem with it.

“As for food and living goods, it seems like we’re managing somehow. It’s all thanks to Yamato-sama!”

“Is not that big of a deal.”

Regarding the food, the cultivation of the Inahon grains was going steady. And with this, the direst problem, which was securing food, was solved.

Besides that, wild animals caught from the forest were being kept as livestock.

Cows and pigs, sheep, chicken-like birds, etc. Their total numbers were still small, but they were steadily increasing. The breeding was also progressing smoothly, since originally, this village kept domesticated animals.

“The children have also become quite adept at hunting, right?”

"They secure meat and leather, and it also serves as a continuous training so that they keep their discipline, so we will keep that going the same."

The reclaiming of the forest around the village was also gradually advancing. The current plan was to hunt down dangerous carnivorous animals around and expand both the living and cultivation areas.

Firewood, in preparation for the severe winter, was also cut from the forest. The forest was vast as opposed to the population of the village, and the growth of trees was faster, so there were no environmental concerns.



It was when they were inspecting the village in such way.

Along with the sounds of hoofs, a horse-riding group came back.

"Yamato-nii-sama! We're back."

"Oh, back already Kuran?"

It was the children of the Han clan the ones who had come back.

They were a prairie clan that became residents of the village several months ago. And right now, they had returned from a mission, riding on their horses.

The beautiful girl who was speaking to Yamato was the daughter of the Han clan chieftain, Kuran. And was now serving as the representative of the surviving Han clan children.

"How was the scouting on the highway, Kuran?"

What Yamato asked was about the long-distance reconnaissance mission.

The Han horses were excellent horses and could travel several hundreds of kilometers in a day. They had gone on the road leading south of the village, to gather some information.

"The thing is, Yamato-nii-sama... something strange happened."

“Is it about the bandits along the highway?”

“Yeah, we heard some strange rumors...”

What Yamato wanted the most was to get some information on the large bandit group. He wanted to grasp the state of the bandit group that had been attacking the highway going from Urd to the nearest town.

In any case, it was because of that bandit group that the peddlers from the city wouldn't come to the village of Urd. And it was also a problem since he could not make use of the wagon he got from the bandits at the windmill.

For now, everyone was living without a problem, but in the future, the bandits were a problem he wanted to solve.

So, he wanted to listen to the information that Kuran got.

“I see. So, according to the rumors, the large bandit group was destroyed by a raid of some unknown group.”

“Yeah, that's what I was told, but the situation is still unclear, nii-sama.”

“I see...”

Yamato's brain started to think, trying to make sense of Kuran's story.

*It's great and all that the bandits disappeared... but...*

While thinking that this was a good opportunity, he couldn't help but to have a bad feeling in a corner of his mind.

Normal life had become possible in Urd at last. But that was also the premonition that a new ‘something’ was about to come.

He wasn't sure it would be something that threatened the peace of the village, or something that would enrich their lives.

But he was sure of something.

“Gosh... it seems like I'll be busy again.”

Yamato stared at the highway that stretched towards the south, as he had a premonition of a new season that was coming sooner.

# Chapter 33

## [Idle talk]: May the Souls of the Great Men Rest

Several days passed since the day of the fierce fight against the Spiritual Beast at the rock salt mine.

Yamato was seriously injured, but thanks to resting, he was now able to move around.

“I wonder if there has been any particular incident in the mine?”

Since he was now able to properly move, he went to the mine to check up on the state of it.

Although the Spiritual Beast had been finally defeated, this was a place that hadn't been touched by people's hands for a very long time.

So, before the full-scale operation began, he wanted to make one final confirmation with his own eyes, and look for any potential danger that remained.

“I believe the mine will be ready to be used after a few repairs.”

There was no major damage dealt to the equipment inside the mine. That being the case, it was highly likely that the facilities would be able to be used after some minor repairs.

This was due to the foundation work by the Mountain Clan People was properly made.

They always did a fitting job not cutting any corner, that was the way of the Mountain Clan.

“Firstly, we'll be mining rock salt for the use in the village. And after that...”

He began thinking about the future of the rock salt mine.

After all, this was one of the best rock salt reserves in the continent.

And since Yamato wanted to keep its existence secret, it was necessary to carefully handle the salt mined in the future.

The reason for that was because ‘salt’ was essential for human survival.

Even throughout the history of Earth, salt always occupied an important position in politics and economics, especially in the ancient times. Salt merchants amassed considerable wealth, some even gaining a title in the nobility thanks to that.

There were also many rulers who took control of the salt away from regional lords, turning it into a monopoly, enriching themselves.

In any case, Yamato wanted to avoid a similar scenario, therefore he wanted to pay close attention to the handling of salt in the future.

“First, we need to arrange the mining and refining methods.”

The salt directly dug out had a lot of impurities mixed in, so it was not very suitable for human consumption.

In order to turn it into an edible commodity, the knowledge of the Mountain Clan was needed.

While considering how to handle the salt, he went inside to check on the safety of the mine.

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“Well then, the last part is the bottom...”

As Yamato finished checking the safety in the mine, he headed for the final place.

The mining site at the bottom of the mine. This was the place where they had the deadly battle against the Spiritual Beast a few days ago.

Going down the gradual slope, he reached the bottom.

“Oh, you’re here, Jii-san.”

He spoke to the person already at that bottom layer.

“So you came too, huh? Kid...”

It was Gaton, the old man from the Mountain Clan.

Without a torch, and only with the light moss in his surroundings, there he stood quietly in the dim-lit cave.

“It’s not good to be just standing in such a dark place, Jii-san.”

“Hmph, the Mountain Clan people can see good enough even in this darkness.”

“That, I can tell.”

Walking closer, Yamato stood next to Gaton, and turning his head, he followed his line of sight.

At the blacksmith’s feet, Gaton was staring at a black ‘something’ with narrowed eyes.

“Is this the corpse of the Spiritual Beast?”

“Yeah... or more like, what’s left of it...”

Gaton looked at the corpse of what once was the ferocious Spiritual Beast they had beaten a few days ago. After Yamato had finally delivered the killing blow, he along with the others left, leaving the corpse in this place.

“When a Spiritual Beast dies, its body turns into dust after its soul left the body, becoming again one with the land...”

“I see.”

Unlike ordinary animals, Spiritual Beasts left behind no blood nor bones after they died.

When their core was destroyed, after a short time they simply turned into dust, scattering along the winds and disappearing without leaving a trace. And together with it, the souls of the creatures it killed while alive.

“Do any of your friends or family are in this dust?”

"Yeah... they were all good people. One was the best miner I've known, the other was a blacksmith..."

A hundred years ago, the village of the Mountain Clan People who lived next to this mine was destroyed and its inhabitants slaughtered when the Spiritual Beast descended upon them.

Some people barely escaped similarly to Gaton, but most of the families were eaten, with their souls devoured by the Spiritual Beast.

"This past hundred years... I hated this Spiritual Beast, I loathed it, despised it. I was never able to let go of it, to leave it in the past..."

"I see."

Almost in a murmur, Gaton continued talking.

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A hundred years ago, I felt ashamed of surviving all by myself, I felt ashamed of the me who left my family and friends behind.

Even after being saved and taken care by the Village of Urd, that flame of grudge never vanished.

The very existence of 'Spiritual Beasts' in the continent was like natural disasters, brought forth by the world itself. And the doom and destruction that came with them couldn't be avoided.

Therefore, I tried to discard the anger of losing my family.

So, with my will broken and with no place to go, I just kept on striking the iron, over and over and over again, for nearly one hundred years in my workshop.

Unexpectedly, the opportunity came for me to acquire the title of Master Grand Blacksmith.

But, even with that, this old heart of mine did not heal.

"It was at that time when you... a 'Lost one' appeared..."

The mysterious young man named Yamato, bringing wisdom that would save the village of Urd. With new technology and courage, he really solved the village's problems.

With a weapon in hand, he defeated ferocious beasts with skills that were too fast for the eye to observe.

He also carried mysterious tools and weapons.

"Those weird mechanical devices... even me who has trained in metal crafting for over a century had never seen something similar before. I honestly was very shocked..."

"Ah, you talking about that time?"

Somewhere in my heart I hoped... [Maybe if it's this person, could he do something about that Spiritual Beast?].

However, I did not want to use someone to exact revenge in my stead.

"It was never my intention for you to risk your live for this selfish me..."

"So that's why you hesitated at the end? And why you decided to toss 'that' to me."

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After listening to Gaton's story, Yamato pulled out the single-edged sword he had attached to his waist. It was the sword that Gaton had handed to him during the last struggle against the Spiritual Beast.

It was thanks to this sword that he was able to defend against the tentacles and approach the Spiritual Beast, barely defeating it.

"That's just a 'sword of grudges' that I made to defeat the Spiritual Beast. It's not something noble like a sword to protect lives..."

Gaton felt deeply regretful.

The 'God of Iron and Fire' who loved dearly the Mountain Clan People had given them a strict command of [Never strike the iron with personal feelings of hatred].

And Gaton had broken that vow.

Based on Yamato's 'Japanese survival knife', a fruit of the apex of contemporary Japanese craftsmen, he decided to create a new sword.

The following seven days and nights before the battle against the Spiritual Beast, he put his body and soul into mixing his treasured alloys with the survival knife. The result was this cursed sword, in which Gaton had poured his hundred years of grudges.

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Gaton story continued.

"But I... I couldn't handle the sword to you when I saw you. I was at loss... I regretted my foolish behavior while crafting it."

"So, you did worry about my equipment."

He talked about the last check before Yamato entered the cave a few days ago. That time, Gaton was nagging him about his light gear.

That was likely the time when he felt conflicted over whether he should hand Yamato the sword or not. That seemed to be the reason for the strange situation.

"Forgive me, kid... no, forgive me, Yamato. Due to my own selfishness, I placed you and the rest of the village in danger..."

With a choked-up voice, Gaton apologized.

A stubborn and inflexible Mountain Clan person was admitting his own mistake.

"Don't worry about it, Jii-san. It's not that big of a deal."

"What!? But, what I did..."

"After all, its thanks to you that me and the rest of the villagers are alive. Let's leave it at that."

"Kid... you..."

Yamato's words carried no lies.

He couldn't even begin to imagine what life would be like in the village if it wasn't for this old blacksmith.

The tools he created greatly improved the living in the village, and the weapons he made allowed them to secure furs and meat to survive the cold and harsh winter.

It was also thanks to Gaton that the crossbow squad was able to protect the village from the cruel bandits.

And now, it was all thanks to the sword made by Gaton that they could secure salt from the mine after getting rid of that monster.

"Not sure of this counts as 'compensation'. But I'll give this to you, Jii-san."

While Gaton was lost for words, Yamato handed to him a bowl-like cup.

Then poured a clear amber liquid from a small bottle he brought from the village.

"What's this...?"

"The village chief's most treasured and hidden liquor. I 'borrowed' a bit."

"Drinking now out of all times...?"

"It's an offering."

He then went on to explain to Gaton.

In his home country, there was the custom of 'dedicating an offering to those who had passed away'. And this liquor and the cup were for that purpose.

"You're surprisingly nice to this old man..."

"Here, I'll accompany you."

Pouring liquor into his cup too, they moved their eyes towards the pile of dust that once was the Spiritual Beast.

"So that the souls of those Mountain Clan warriors may find rest... cheers."

"Cheers..."

There was no need for a long goodbye.

He and Gaton raised the cup in silence, towards nobody in particular.

Offering a mourn towards the souls of those great men.

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*TLN: The sword, Gaton calls it maken, which could be either magic sword or cursed sword, but since he is regretful of the feelings he poured into it while making it I went with cursed sword.*

# Chapter 34

## [Idle talk]: A New Grassland Bow

About a month went by after the rock salt mine was cleaned from its Spiritual Beast inhabitant.

And with the injuries of the children now cured, Urd's life had returned to its original peaceful days.

It was at that time, Yamato was located a little away from the village, in a meadow near the mountains.

“Alright, now we'll test the new bow.”

The purpose was to check on the state of the newly completed bow.

“Yamato-nii-sama... is this a bow exclusive for the Han clan?”

“Yeah, it's called Temujin Bow.”

*TLN: Temüjin Borjigin , also known as Genghis Khan.*

“Temujin Bow...”

“It's got its name from a great hero from my worl... from the continent.”

“Named after a hero... thank you very much for giving it such a great name! Yamato-nii-sama!”

Kuran, the girl who acted as the representative of the Han clan, expressed her gratitude showing a big smile.

This beautiful girl was the direct descendant of the Han clan chieftain from when they lived in the grasslands. And now she held the position of leader of the archer cavalry formed by the surviving Han clan children.

“Well then, Yamato-nii-sama, I will now proceed to start the shooting test!”

“Yeah. If you notice anything, don’t hesitate and say it.”

“Understood, thank you very much! Alright, everyone, let’s begin! Ha! “

“Understood, Kuran-sama! Ha! “

Along with the command of the girl Kuran, close to thirty mounted troops rushed across the meadow.

These surviving boys and girls of the Han clan, were now new inhabitants of Urd.

Although they were still children, they were born in the grasslands and were used to run and handle horses, so their arms and legs were sufficiently developed.

“Yamato-sama... is that the new bow?”

“Yeah. The mechanism is similar to your Marionette Bow, Liscia-san.”

“Ohh... I see.”

As they took some distance, the Han clan children began the test of the new bow.

And next to Yamato, the granddaughter of the village chief was also gazing at such sight. Being a hunter, she had a good eyesight, so even at that distance they were clearly visible to her.

“Even while riding those swaying horses... truly a splendid archery.”

“I designed that Temujin Bow accordingly to bring forth the Han clan’s potential. So, it’s easy to use even while manipulating horses.”

“Ohh, that makes sense. As expected of Yamato-sama.”

It was a short bow made by the old blacksmith Gaton using the same complex mechanism of Liscia’s Marionette Bow.

As usual, Yamato made a rough sketch and Gaton polished it into the final result.

“One wouldn’t think that is a short bow, considering that long range and penetrating power.”

“According to my calculations, they have several times more strength than the bows the Han clan had used so far.”

“Several times... Amazing...”

Liscia was very impressed by the shooting spectacle that was happening in the distance.

That Temujin Bow was really a treasure that combined modern knowledge and principles of Earth, with the techniques and skills of the Mountain Clan blacksmith Gaton.

“Still, the power is a bit lower than your Marionette Bow, Liscia-san. However, the Temujin Bow compensates for it by being easy to use on horseback.”

“I see... you have to consider who the user is going to be and their aptitudes.”

By the way, according to Gaton, nobody but him could replicate it exactly the same.

It was the same as with the Urd crossbow and the Marionette Bow, since both of them also required special gears for the inner mechanism.

“But even so, the Han clan children are truly amazing...”

“Yeah, that’s right. It might be a natural talent and thanks to the environment they grew up in.”

The riding technique of the Han clan children, Kuran included, was really amazing.

*I’ve experienced it a little too, but to shoot a bow while riding a horse, it requires special skills and discipline.*

Talent was necessary to accurately shoot a target while riding a horse galloping at full speed.

Furthermore, they treated the horses’ legs as their own, and moved them into position advantageous to them. It was a trick that could only be done by the people of the

grasslands, that precise shooting from the opponent's blind spot.

"I'll ask Kuran and the others to perform long-range patrols and scouting in the future."

"So, the children of Urd will be in charge of the forest. And the highway and grasslands will be for the children of the Han clan, Yamato-sama?"

"Yeah, that's right."

In the grasslands, with few places to cover such as trees and rocks, the archery cavalry showed overwhelming combat capabilities.

*Since all the Temujin Bows have been prepared already, I'll give the Han clan children a new job.*

The Han horses were excellent and could run for hundreds of kilometers a day, making the Han clan the kings of the plains.

*I'm already looking forward to what kinds of results they'll bring.*

"Yamato-nii-sama! The Temujin Bow is truly amazing!"

"It also shoots way beyond of what our old bows did!"

"And it's very easy to handle!"

After finishing testing the Temujin Bow, the Han clan children came back to Yamato.

Every single one of them was excitedly praising the performance of their new bow.

After that, all that was left was to fine tune them according to each child.

"But even so, Kuran-sama was splendid... her aim was magnificent and she could hit the same spot five times in a row."

"But if I were to be compared against my deceased father, he could do it twenty times in a row, I still got a long way to reach there."

It appeared they were doing some shooting training passed down among the Han clan.

That was a training where they ran through designated places within a certain time, and competed for points by accurately shooting.

*Among all the children of the Han clan, Kuran who has the blood of the chieftain in her veins seems to be overwhelmingly superior compared to the others.*

Kuran's late father was once known as the most famous horse rider in the continent.

"Oh, that sounds interesting."

"Does Yamato-nii-sama wants to challenge us in a 'game'?"

"Sure."

Finding it interesting, Yamato decided to try the 'Han Challenge'.

*Back in Japan, I had a few horse-riding experiences. At the very least, I can advance without falling off.*

"Try not to overdo it, Yamato-nii-sama! Hitting three is more than enough if you are a beginner."

"Gotcha, I'll take it easy."

Borrowing one of the Temujin Bows, Yamato rode the large horse, 'Regal Wind' who had become his own horse. It was an unruly horse who was only obedient to him.

"By the way, Kuran-sama's father holds the record, with twenty shots in a row."

"I'll try my best."

*Though I said that, I'm an amateur that can't probably even shoot a bow while sitting still. I'll just go slowly and aim carefully.*

"Alright, then let's start counting."

This was Yamato's first experience in mounted archery.

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And after a few minutes.

“A-amazing...”

“I counted thirty-two points...”

“Amazing! As expected of Yamato-nii-sama!“

“Is not that big of a deal.”

His first Han challenge ended.

And so, a record that would greatly repaint the history of the Han clan was born, [Thirty-two hits within the time limit].

# Characters and terms so far

-----◇-----Residents of the village of Urd-----◇-----

## **【Yamato】**

An ordinary young man who was transported from modern day Japan into another world.

Hobbies are mountain climbing and making tools. Not very good at socializing, especially bad at dealing with children.

Due to his feelings of gratitude, he decided to do his best to help Urd Village which was at the verge of destruction.

Although he is dexterous with his hands, he is sometimes a bit insensitive and clumsy (Especially regarding romantic emotions).

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Han horse (Regal Wind), Single-edged sword masterpiece made by the blacksmith Gaton, Owner of the rock salt mine, Nucleus of the Spiritual Beast (Core).

-----<People of Urd>-----

A minority living at the frontier's mountainous area. Wearing colorful cloths and having a unique culture, they have quietly lived in a mountainside basin. In fact, they are the survivors of a belligerent clan that fought long ago to conquer the continent.

## **【Liscia】**

Granddaughter of the village chief of Urd.

A beautiful girl with a lovely face who, along with Yamato, started the restoration of the village on behalf of her grandfather, the village chief. A fourteen-year-old adult. She is an excellent hunter and her commanding abilities have improved.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Compound Mechanical Long

Bow (Marionette Bow).

## 【Village Chief】

Head of the village of Urd

Polite and courteous elderly man, also Liscia's grandfather. In order to save the village from its crisis, he entrusted his authority to Liscia and Yamato. Although on the surface he looks like a kind-hearted old man, deep down he is quite the schemer. His recent worry is that his treasure is gradually decreasing.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Treasured liquor.

## 【Elderly people in the village】

Old people who were left behind in Urd Village.

They possess a number of craftsmanship techniques such as leatherworking, food preserving, Urd cloth weaving, porcelain production and building skills. While the children aren't working away from the village, they pass down their knowledge and techniques to them.

Before, they were not suited to work since they lacked physical strength, but after Yamato came, they slowly have regained their vitality.

## 【Adult people in the village】

They were taken away by the evil Feudal Lord. That's the reason nobody over the age of fourteen remained in the village, except for the old people. It's unclear their current situation.

-----<Mountain Clan People>-----

A short, robust race loved by the God of iron and fire. They are skillful people with superior talent for Blacksmithing, crafting and mining. They dislike lying and have stubborn personalities.

## 【Gaton】

Old blacksmith of the Mountain Clan People who lives in the outskirts of Urd Village.

A stubborn old man with a bad mouth. But his skills as a blacksmith are excellent, and he is able to instantly understand the rough drawings of Yamato and craft the items swiftly.

He is one of the only three people in the continent who possess the title of Grand Master Blacksmith.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Large Fang of a Spiritual Beast 〈Material〉 , Ironclad Large Shield.

### **【Rock Salt Miners】**

Gaton's former colleagues who came back for the first time in a hundred years bringing their families with them. They made a deal with the people of Urd to take care of them in exchange for them mining out the rock salt. They decided to settle on the outskirts of the village.

-----Children in the village-----

-----<People of Urd>:

### **【Guts】**

Oldest child among the village children.

A hot-blooded kid with a simple character, but with the presence of a leader and generosity towards other children. Prefers hunting with a crossbow instead of doing other jobs. Slightly younger than Liscia.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Crossbow.

### **【Chloe (aka Painter girl)】**

A quiet girl the same age as Guts.

Although not good at hard work and haughty like him, she has an excellent ability to draw pictures and write characters. She was appointed as a secretary of the village by Yamato when he noticed her talents. Loves reading books, and always looks forward to visit the village's book storage.

She's a smart girl who helps Liscia, she also helps with the managements of the village recently. Slightly younger than Liscia.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Notebooks and writing instruments from modern Japan.

### **【Children of the people of Urd】**

Children whose parents were taken away by the Lord.

Many of them are curious of many things due to their innocence and pureness. Still, they live a hard life without succumbing to fear. Their physical abilities are higher than ordinary people, and are good at activities in the mountainous forests.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Crossbow.

-----<People of the Han clan>-----

People with a talent to treat horses like an extension of their own bodies. They are excellent in animal husbandry and horse-riding techniques, and became residents of Urd after they became orphans.

### **【Kuran】**

Beautiful girl of the Han clan and the direct descendant of the late chieftain. Now she holds the position of leader of the archer cavalry formed by the surviving Han clan children. Has a superior talent in handling the bow while mounted, hates to lose. Slightly younger than Liscia.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Temujin Bow, Han horse.

### **【Han clan children】**

Children of the people of the grasslands and new residents in the village of Urd. Although their ages are all over the place, they have superior talent in handling the bow while mounted. They usually work in the village helping with the farming and taking care of the livestock.

-Special possessions and equipment at the current time: Temujin Bow, Han horse.

-----Others-----

### **【Evil Feudal Lord】**

One day he suddenly marched towards Urd Village and took all the adults away. His residence is located in a big town quite a distance away from the village. It is a mystery the reason why he took away only the adults of Urd.

### **【Bandits in the Windmill Hut】**

An armed group that aimed at the Village of Urd. They were noticed beforehand and were completely annihilated. Their property, which included a wagon and two horses was taken by Yamato.

### **【Spiritual Beast in the Rock Salt Mine】**

Its purpose and environment are unknown, making it a mysterious life form. Able to crush a squad of knights, even with their strong combat skills.

Its first form casted a type of ‘curse’ that made groups attack each other.

In its second form... ? Well, the ‘curse’ seemed to have changed into jet-black tentacles, giving it an overwhelming defense and offense after its resurrection.

# **Comentary on weapons' performance so far**

## **【Urd type-Crossbow】 ~For children use~**

A medium-sized crossbow designed by Yamato and produced by the Blacksmith Gaton. Easier to wind up than normal crossbows, excellent in fast-paced fights and has great destructive power. Shooting with it is easy, and boasts an overwhelming firepower when used as a group.

Shooting distance: B

Destructive power: A

Firing rate: C

Hit accuracy: A

Portability: B

Ease of training: A

Ability to be mass produced: B

Maintainability: A

Environmental resistance: A

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## **【Urd type-Crossbow】 ~For Yamato's use~**

A medium-sized crossbow designed by Yamato and produced by the Blacksmith Gaton. Has incredible destructive power but in turn the wind-up strength required is more than what children can handle.

Shooting distance: B

Destructive power: S

Firing rate: B

Hit accuracy: A

Portability: B

Ease of training: A

Ability to be mass produced: C

Maintainability: A

Environmental resistance: A

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### **【Compound Mechanical Long Bow (Marionette Bow)】 ~For Liscia's use~**

A complex long bow designed by Yamato and produced by the Blacksmith Gaton. Exceeds ordinary long bows in all aspects. Gaton said that he probably could never make a similar one again... maybe.

Shooting distance: S

Destructive power: A-

Firing rate: A

Hit accuracy: S

Portability: C

Ease of training: C

Ability to be mass produced: D

Maintainability: S

Environmental resistance: A

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### **【Great King's short bow (Temujin Bow)】 ~For Han clan children use~**

A type of compound short bow devised by Yamato and produced by the Blacksmith Gaton. Although a smaller version of the Marionette Bow, it can be more easily mass produced. Exceeds ordinary short bows in all aspects. It was designed to be easy to use while riding.

Shooting distance: A

Destructive power: B +

Firing rate: A +

Hit accuracy: A +

Portability: A

Ease of training: C

Ability to be mass produced: B

Maintainability: A

Environmental resistance: A

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## **【Gaton-made single-edged masterpiece sword】 ~For Yamato's use~**

High quality katana-style sword made with the survival knife Yamato brought from modern day Japan. Gaton added to it his treasured alloys and reforged the knife into a sword by spending seven days and seven nights working on it non-stop. Although the blade isn't as long as typical Katanas, it's easy to use. Has a sharpness that could be considered worthy of a magic/cursed sword.

## **【Ironclad large shield】 ~For Gaton's use~**

A sturdy shield that Gaton secretly had made for when he was to confront the Spiritual Beast again. Boasts high defensive power, able to withstand even a blow from a Spiritual Beast. But on the downside, its weight places quite a burden on its user.

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## **【Fully armed Yamato】**

Heavy armed state of Yamato during the encounter against the Spiritual Beast at the rock salt mine. Defense was discarded and instead focused on high mobility and high firepower. Because modern tools and defense weapons were kept hidden, it might be possible to trick people of this different world into assuming he is less dangerous.

- Gaton-made single-edged masterpiece sword (Carried on the shoulder, diagonally on the back)
- Yamato-use Urd type crossbow x2 (Each fixed on a side at the waist)
- Medium size survival knife x2
- Small size throwing knife x8
- Flash Snap (Improved flash): Strengthened digital camera flash.
- Electric baton: Reinforced self-defense equipment. Shocks and stops the movements of an opponent.
- Blinding powder: Powder produced from a moth living in the forest (poisonous).
- .....Etc.

※ Thanks to a solar charger carried in his climbing backpack, electric tools can be recharged. However, it is impossible to repair the modern products and they will inevitably stop working after some years.

※ Except for Yamato with his increased physical abilities, normally it would be impossible to move at high speed under the weight of that equipment.



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